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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

THE WRITING OF GHANA

Nation and the Shaping of African Modernity

©

KWAKU LARBI KORANG

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Department of English

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall 1995

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25 September, 1995

It is a far greater pleasure helping to build up a tradition than being obliged to live on the memory of one.

--The de Graft Johnson brothers, J. C. and J. W., Gold Coast Nationalists.

For his own conception of the world, a man always belongs to a certain grouping...He is a conformist to some conformity, he is always man-mass or man-collective. The question is this: of what historical type is the conformity, the man-mass, of which he is a part? ....The beginning of the critical elaboration [of this question] is [the attempt to reach a] consciousness of what one really is, that is, a know thyself as the product of the historical process which has left you an infinity of traces gathered together without the advantage of an inventory.

--Antonio Gramsci, "The Study of Philosophy"

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Faculty of Graduate Studies

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Writing of Ghana: Nation and the Shaping of African Modernity* submitted by Kwaku Larbi Korang in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Stephen Slemon, supervisor

Dr. Ron Ayling

Dr. Daphne Read

Dr. George Lang

Dr. Biodun Jeyifo

Sept 18, 1995

To the memory of two great individuals who affected my life deeply:

my mother, Yaa Kokwe;

and my brother, Kwadwo Boakye-Korang.

ABSTRACT

This study proposes as its object the cultural-nationalist writing of Ghana. The analyses it brings to this writing are informed by an understanding that, like any other cultural formation, Ghana has grown out of the involved interactions of historical forces, large and small. This study in effect construes its object within interrelated and overlapping orders of cultural meaning. It has been expedient to formulate an understanding of it in these terms through a notion of a comparative African modernity.

As the "ultimate" form of understanding brought to bear in this study on the writing of Ghana, African modernity is derived in terms of at least three overlapping propositions. In one of them, it is a form of socio-historical understanding intended to convey an idea of Africa as objectively situated in historical modernity. The basis of this objectivity is established in the globe-transforming encounter between Europe and non-European Others--referred to as the "colonial encounter"--whose origins go back in time to the fifteenth century.

To the extent that, over time, a dimension of shared desire appears between the human components of this unequal encounter, what follows and is indexed to the socio-historical understanding of a comparative African modernity in this study is a form of anthropological understanding. What the latter discloses is how this dimension of shared desire invests the structure of a common mythology in which "nation" appears as a worldly possibility.

If a modernist mythology inscribes nation in a human commonality or generality, how to account for the relation between the specific nation and the generality? African modernity, taking this question into its purview in this study, proposes the modern as the generality of a problematic--i.e., a framework of abstract possibilities--and the African as the specificity of a thematic that projects the conduct of the general possibilities into unique realization. African modernity, that is, yields a mode of understanding whose terms are projective. And, in this projective dimension, Ghana and its cultural-nationalist writing appear as a sub-theme of the modernist African thematic.

PREFACE

Whoever will claim a place for Africa in the modern is bound to find him or herself confronting two tendencies, the one frankly skeptical, the other frankly hostile. I call these the "view from the outside" and the "view from the inside," respectively. The former, for instance, is fairly represented by this question: "Postmodernity in Africa?"--which is the title of a recent article in an anthropological journal reviewing a book about computers and computerization in Africa.[1] The implication, the unspoken conclusion, of the titular tongue-in-cheek is--"Africa?: who would have thought?" In effect, who would have thought they were modern, let alone postmodern? On the question mark, then, converges a whole host of prejudices and negative assumptions about "them" inside Africa, prejudices and assumptions projected on the continent by the gaze of an "us" outside that assumes an original--and hence a proprietary and exclusive (and exclusionary)--relation with the modern.

To the question that assumes that Africa cannot be modern let alone postmodern, this study answers "why not?" In other words, this is a study that argues a place for Africa in the modern; a study that claims African modernity as a valid existential datum, and which it promises to recover by appropriate analysis. As for the premises of this modernity in which Africa necessarily appears, they are argued not in the original terms represented by the proprietary and exclusive (usually Eurocentric) view from the outside. Rather, they are established in an inclusive middle; a middle to be understood thus in a complex and by no means symmetrical set of mediations and exchanges, spread over the

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[1] Eric Hirsch, "Postmodernity in Africa?" Current Anthropology 33.3 (June 1992): 333-334.

last five hundred years, in which an imaginary of Africa has appeared and in which, to a greater or lesser degree, this Africa alters its shape and meaning. This study, that is, proceeds from a historically grounded conception of the comparative modernity of the continent; and this is a conception of the modern as the enactment of new possibilities between that which is indigenous to the continent and that which is exogenous but nevertheless has borne and continues to bear down heavily on it.

What must the claim for an Africa that is modern come up against from the "inside," as it were? Here the confrontation comes from an anti-modernist tendency, by no means dominant but still significant, that has struck an oppositional critical pose, particularly in the sharp exchanges and lively debates within African literary nationalist writing. What this tendency prescribes as the meaning of the "African" in African literature is a designation that makes this cultural endeavour fall outside the scope of the modern--as I have tried to set it up above--altogether. I refer here to the flailings, in the name of a return to a pure "African" Tradition, against the "euromodernist" "contamination" of African literature done with polemical fervour by the so-called troika of Nigerian critics, Chinweizu et al, in their Toward the Decolonization of African Literature.[2] What the arguments of the troika do is to foreclose completely on the question that the paradox of a European-language culture of African letters--and this is the paradox on whose basis the debates can take place at all--is a datum of cultural negotiation whose complexity must argue the comparative modernity of continental endeavour.

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[2] Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike, Toward the Decolonization of African Literature (Washington, D.C.: Howard UP, 1983).

Recently, in a revaluation of the oppositions driving the troika's arguments--inside vs. outside; particular vs. universal, etc.--the Ghanaian philosopher and cultural critic, Kwame Anthony Appiah, has shown how their endeavour, "nativism," is already included in that which they affect to contest. The troika's arguments, Appiah points out, operate and make sense within a larger--hence not a particularly autonomous "African" (as they would like to think)--domain of cultural-nationalist discourse (or language order). And, what is more, the real determinations of the elements of this domain appear to elude the troika so that a mere inversion of the terms and hierarchies it provides allows them to think they are crusaders for a humane end--African autonomy--when, in fact, they are merely perpetuating the inhuman dominion of a discourse programmatically invented by others. In effect, what Appiah shows is a troika caught up, even in the process of seeming to opt out, in the very exchanges of cultural modernity. And, worse, as reflected in the language and concepts they use, they are caught up in a confirmation of a most humanly impoverishing order going into the structuring of this cultural modernity.[3]

What does this "modernist" reading--a humane modernism, we might call it--of the troika's anti-modern temper argue about Appiah's own endeavour, especially since In My Father's House, the work in which the critique of the troika appears, bears the suggestive sub-title Africa in the Philosophy of Culture? Appiah's "philosophy" we might take to mean a spirit of rational inquiry that attempts to separate truth from error; and "culture" we might take as presupposing the human (and humanistic) enterprise itself, in its shared dimension. In that sense, what Appiah means by "philosophy of culture" is a

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[3] See "Out of Africa: Topologies of Nativism," in In My Father's House (New York: OUP, 1992) 47-72.

critical reflection, for humane ends, on a world or global culture, on that which operates to constitute cultural modernity itself. The philosopher's "Africa," in that case, appears in this cultural modernity in a comparative framework, and it does so, by and large, as an "excuse" to begin unravellings of the unsalutary mythological thread with which the fabric of the modern is woven. And so one after the other, racialism(s), nationalism(s), nativism(s)--other "isms" as well--along with their African progeny and varieties are shredded.

Appiah's "ground"--and he admits its profound motivation is a transnational one--it would seem, is a transhistorical Reason whose operation reveals what passes for reason in history: our national imperative over their nation; our superior race over their inferior race, and so on--as so many emanations of potentially, if not actually, destructive myth. This is all very well, but what I see as a problem here is that, willing to err on the side of humanistic Truth, Appiah seems also prepared to risk throwing the African cultural nationalist baby out with the bath water. If so, in this might be found the circumstance wherein this study intervenes in the "inside" debate over "Africa" and its relation (or absence thereof, as some will prefer it) with "the modern." And the intervention, categorically, is not on the side of the troika. Rather, seeking, so to speak, "a method in the madness" identified by Appiah, this study attempts to restore the (African) nation properly to his transnationally argued modernism.[4] It directs, that is, the "transnational"--a postulate which carries the sense of exchange, of the mediated, of the comparative--towards and into the priority of the nation. And this is another task--and it is an immense and daunting one--that I hope to bring the construct African modernity to accomplish in

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[4] See In My Father's House 155.

this study.

Apropos this challenge, two propositions appear axiomatic to me. The first is Fanon's eloquently argued point that:

> The consciousness of self is not the closing of a door to communication. Philosophic thought teaches us that it is its guarantee. National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international [or transnational] dimension.[5]

Fanon appears to argue a double priority here, at once for the national and the inter- or transnational. We have to conclude, however, that the former has the priority of a beginning while the latter is shaped in and as the priority of an end. As for the second proposition, it appears in Anderson's argument that truth and error cannot be admissible categories in discussions of the concept of the nation. To Gellner's "Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist,"[6] Anderson counters:

> The drawback to this formulation...is that Gellner is so anxious to show that nationalism masquerades under false pretences that he assimilates "invention" to "fabrication" and "falsity," rather than to "imagining" and "creation." In this way, he implies that "true" communities exist which can be advantageously juxtaposed to nations...

To the extent that the opposition is a false one, Anderson concludes: "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined."[7]

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[5] Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove and Weidenfeld, 1968) 247. Emphasis mine.

[6] The skeptical spirit of Gellner's point is the same one carried in Appiah's point that: "Every human identity is constructed, historical...Invented histories, invented biologies come with every identity; each is a kind of role that has to be scripted, structured to conventions of narrative to which the world never quite manages to conform." See "African Identities," in In My Father's House 174.

[7] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 15. Emphasis mine.

It would seem then that regarding the question of the imagined community of the nation, myth and myth is all we have (hence the "anthropological spirit" in which Anderson's inquiry proceeds), and, what is more, this mythology is an all-pervading one. For, as Anderson argues, "in the modern world, everyone can, will, should 'have' a nation, as he or she has a gender..."[8] Inasmuch, however, as the myth of nation inscribes socio-cultural modernity at large, this indifferent (or abstract) possibility makes sense only in the desire to give it particular realization. Andersonian modernity may be nation writ large, but into this the datum the particular nation insinuates itself as the small writ of the modern.

This observation about small and large brings me to yet another point about African modernity: the conceptual framework in which it is imagined in this study. I reach for the modern in two related guises: on the one hand, as a problematic; and on the other, as a thematic. In deriving the two terms, I must acknowledge a debt to Partha Chatterjee whose Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World provides a thoroughgoing exploration of their analytic potentials and their long history in intellectual usage. Chatterjee's work reads critically the claims and functions of social ideology in the colonial world as they appear against a background of colonialist knowledge and power. His usage of problematic and thematic in this context specifies levels of distinction in the analysis of this social ideology in its specifically nationalist form. The problematic emerges as that part of (nationalist) ideology which "asserts the existence, and often the practical realizabilty, of certain historical possibilities" and the thematic as that part which "seeks to justify those claims by an appeal to both epistemic and moral

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[8] Anderson, Imagined Communities 14

principles."[9] And, so as not to reduce them to fixed, unchanging categories, the critic reminds us further that there is a richly dialectical interplay between these levels. Each, to a greater or lesser degree, exerts a modifying pressure over the other in accordance with the changes in the history and power relations in which nationalist thought and practice moves.

In my invoking of problematic and thematic to define African modernity conceptually, what I do is draw centrally on the way Chatterjee both positions them as separate levels of analysis and dialectically integrates them in relation to the object of his study. Towards my own purposes in this study, however, I have felt it necessary to change the orders of this usage and give the two terms a rather different analytic slant. I have done this with an eye on their history of usage, a history which, as elaborated by Chatterjee, shows the shades of nuance and inflection they have acquired as they have been put to intellectual work down the years. For instance, as the critic points out, in one context of usage, problematic indicates the "common thrust or direction of theoretical inquiry implied by the posing of a whole group or ensemble of problems in a particular scientific discipline." The crucial point in this definition is that element of generality ("common thrust") in terms of which, and under whose dispensation, particular sub-elements derive their common sense. It is this sense of a same-making element, an abstract generality lying between and linking sub-elements in one continuum of reference, that I bring to bear on conceptualizing the modern as problematic in this study.

Then, again, as Chatterjee points out further, thematic has been used--in the context of the philosophy of phenomenology this time--to mean that "which poses

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[9] Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World (London: Zed Books, 1986) 38.

something as an intentional object of mental activity."[10] I derive a thematic of the modern in this study in terms of this structure of an active intention which, to the extent that it "poses" its object, may be thought to "set off," "differentiate" or "particularize" this object against what would otherwise remain "undifferentiated" backdrop. It is the nation, to the extent that it has been posed as the object of a differential or particular "intention," that I wish to take up the analytic space opened up by considering the modern at the level of a thematic.

As I mobilize these two analytical terms, then, I mean the problematic simply to designate, on the one hand, a general framework which discloses certain abstract possibilities and potentials. On the other hand, the thematic, still within the general, should be thought as a domain of relatively defined specificity, a domain which, as such, proposes to conduct (or actually conducts) the abstract possibilities of the general into unique and practical realization. In that sense, in the construction African modernity, we might consider the African as conducting the business of the thematic--a specifically nationalist thematic--within an overall problematic subsumed under the modern. To say this is not to forget that this study is about the nationalist "writing of Ghana" (albeit in African modernity). What this must argue, then, are relations of complex mediation even at the level of the thematic. Beginning with the Introduction--and throughout this study--I will try to show how we might think these relations on the level of the thematic. As well, it should go without saying, I hope to try to show the articulation of these thematic relations with and within the overall problematic.

Finally, to return once more to Appiah, whose writings have been a great source

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[10] Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought, 38.

of inspiration for me (as will be evident in the pages that follow): the brief if critical reading I have given here of Appiah reading the comparative modernity of Africa is a negotiation of a place for my own arguments in what he himself would understand as a "space-clearing gesture."[11] If I make it seem as if Appiah's intellectual modernism is beholden to a transhistorical (or pure) Reason, this is a reductive reading. It travesties what in reality are the thoughts and ideas of a complex and agile mind. For, in setting up the inescapable mythology of the modern as my reason, I have already been anticipated by Appiah in his fine essay "Tolerable Falsehoods: Agency and the Interests of Theory."[12] Here, by way of the notion of "interest," he argues a place for myth in structuring the world in livable, if necessarily incomplete, ways. If the world is never necessarily complete, as the interest invested in myth or theory might pretend to make it, then searching inquiry, itself a function of interest, is that which creates room for improvement in myth and in theory.

Appiah's spirit of unravelling and debunking, then, should not be considered an ungenerous one. In relation to the "inside" of African cultural-nationalist endeavour, as much as to cultural modernity at large, it is meant to get rid of the categorical and put in its place the subjunctive. The beginning of this enterprise necessarily proceeds negatively: reading categorical "isms" in which ends solely justify means, the critic's response, so to speak, is: "the end may not justify the means." What the negative subjunctive "may not" implies, then, is the requirement for a sustained critical look at means, and this is the forensic exercise whose unfolding we see in In My Father's

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[11] Appiah, In My Father's House 149.

[12] Appiah, "Tolerable Falsehoods: Agency and the Interests of Theory," in Consequences of Theory, eds. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 63-90.

House.

But if Appiah has sounded the negative beginning, what follows from there? This is where I would like to see this study intervening as a gesture in the direction of a positive beginning. My premise, therefore--and it is a subjunctive one, too--is: "the end may justify the means." As I come to a retrospective examination of the modernist writing of Ghana and the African nation in general in the 1990s, it is to look, in the light of certain grave historical outcomes, at ends for all they are worth; it is to see how means already identified (which may be all we have) may be critically tailored and re-tailored to meet these, perhaps today more than ever, exigent nationalist ends.

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Five years ago, I was awarded a CIDA scholarship to study at the University of Alberta. My especial gratitude goes to all in the Department of English and elsewhere who made this arrangement possible. In deciding to come to Edmonton, I could not have known at the time what a fortuitous choice it was I was making. Over the years that I have been a part of the University, I have profited greatly, intellectually and socially, from my association with a number of wonderful people. To Romita Choudhury, Dan Coleman, Linda Warley and Jane Watt, members of the post-colonial discussion group to which I belonged, thanks for the group solidarity and sense of intellectual seriousness you fostered. As I remember our many hours of profitable discussion, it is worth recalling also that our coming together would not have happened had we not first met as classmates and faced the rigours of the post-colonial theory and literature course put together by Dr. Stephen Slemon in 1990-1991. My heartfelt gratitude goes to Dr. Slemon for his part in initiating the big questions that shaped the common intellectual ground that we found as a group. Beyond this, I am also grateful to Dr. Slemon for agreeing to supervise this thesis and for his input as it took shape.

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Read, all of Edmonton. Since I have been living in two "worlds" in Canada (Alberta and Ontario), the citation is incomplete without the following Ontarians: Dr. Ama de Graft-Johnson, Cheryl-Ann Jackson, Patrick Fernando, Albert Sefa, Muriel Aikins, George Ahthew and Dannabang Kuwabong of Hamilton, and Isobel Kusi-Obodum (Abena) of Toronto. Special mention goes to my extended family in Ghana--to my sister, Henrietta Asare-Korang especially, but also my brothers, nephews, nieces, cousins and others too numerous to name--for their support and encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

Propositions, Abstractions, General Assumptions, Method

Recently, we are told that "intellectuals everywhere are now caught up--whether as volunteers, draftees, resisters--in a struggle for the articulation of their respective nations." And, everywhere, in this endeavour, "language and literature"--two elements that suggest, beyond a limited political-sociology, an extended dimension of socio-cultural inquiry--"appear to be central to that articulation."[1] If this study emerges inside this great culturalist Zeitgeist, the insights I pursue and the claims I make in it on behalf of the "literature" (or, as conceived broadly here, the writing) of my nation are hardly in a spirit of jingoistic celebration. Nor, for that matter, are they, in a self-congratulatory measure, to establish whether and where my nation might compare favourably with others. On the contrary, as I step into the little charted territory of the cultural meaning of the African nation, I do so from a lingering sense of crisis and a need to frame a beginning amidst this crisis. As for this crisis, an Africanist commentator has recently laid out its basis in "Africa and the [exogenous and colonially imposed] curse of the nation-state."[2] The insight--and we cannot dismiss it--is sobering. And yet if ours is an accursed heritage, get round it we must; and hence this project of beginning must remain

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[1] See Kwame A. Appiah, In My Father's House (New York: OUP, 1992) 53. Emphasis mine.

[2] This is the sub-title of Basil Davidson's Black Man's Burden (New York: Times Books, 1992).

the outstanding imperative of the present and the immediate future. In this we can do no worse than first try to understand the past that converges on the present--i.e., our heritage of nation and nationalism--in as comprehensive a manner as we are able.

A more or less comprehensive understanding of the heritage of the nation in the African context, then, is what I set out to achieve in this study. And this comprehensiveness, I would hope, is reflected in the ensemble of relations implied in the title: The Writing of Ghana: Nation and the Shaping of African Modernity. The canvas is a rather large one and intricate at that, but since this must be so, it imposes a necessity to begin with a careful explanation of terms. By way of opening the study, therefore, I wish to make a number of very general observations, and these are as much about the concepts and propositions that the title implies as about the assumptions I seek to embody in those propositions.

The first proposition, and this is the one which appears in the first half of the title, is the "writing of (the nation) Ghana." In it, I propose a necessary link between the gerund (or verbal noun) writing--which is also the continuous form of the infinitive "to write"--and the proper noun Ghana. Just as in the figure of metonymy part is able to stand in for, and draw into itself the meaning of, whole, this is a Ghana which, to a greater or lesser degree, I assume as standing in for a holistic African nation. The holistic derivation "African nation" is a working abstraction that affords this study the flexibility it needs to argue its points in the large. Still "Africa" and "the African" are not purely formal categories derived for the sake of flexible argumentation. Throughout this study, we will see that they are assumptions that have a historical, imaginary and

discursive guarantee.[3]

As for the link between gerund and proper noun, writing and nation, it might be termed, in the context under review in this study, a predicative one. In the sense that a linguist or grammarian, for instance, might use the term, a "predicate" is that in terms of which a quality or property is attributed to a nominal subject. We might, in this sense, think of the agencies identified as writing the nation, in the context reviewed by this study, in terms of subject negotiating its way towards and into a predicate. (And, not to break my analogical stride, this writing towards "spills over" the first half of the title into the second so that if the first half nominates a national subject-in-the-writing, then the latter half, "African modernity," is that which can be predicated of the subject so nominated).

A further point I need to clarify at the outset is the exact status of "Ghana" as it appears in the title and in much of this study. Since the main body of writings I investigate fall largely between 1840 and 1957, what I mean by "Ghana" cannot be the more or less fully-constituted nation-state that became independent from British colonial rule in 1957, and which today "a people of Ghana"--formerly "peoples of the Gold Coast"--have come, more or less, to take for granted. On the contrary, by "Ghana," I refer to an idea-nation--its meaning now extended now contracted--which exists before and looks towards this substantive Ghana. If its beginnings are more or less amorphous,

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[3] Cf. Fanon's contention that, since the African is never so much an African as since he has been dominated by the whites, "when he decides to prove that he has a culture...[he] comes to realize that history points out a well-defined path to him: he must demonstrate that an [African] culture exists." To colonialism's wholesale denial of the human reality of the continent, therefore, the response of colonized Africa is of a necessity "continental in its breadth." See Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture," in The Wretched of the Earth, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1968) 212.

what I propose in a reconstruction of this idea is to show how it undergoes transformations and in time comes to anticipate the more or less clear outline of the substantive.[4] In that sense, what a reading of the writing of "Ghana" means for this study is a comprehensive review of this idea-nation as it looks towards its substantive. And the comprehensiveness of this review is such as to take in not only those namings and meanings which we observe this idea-nation drawing into itself and consolidating in the writing, but, as well, those namings and meanings which have lost their keen edge over time.

Hence, for instance, we have the prior designation the "Gold Coast nation." This is a designation which "Ghana," emerging as a self-conscious rejection of the unsalutary colonial taint of the name "the Gold Coast," replaces. In doing so, though, it draws into itself the nationalist meanings and values accrued by, and hence establishes continuities with, the Gold Coast nation. As for this prior designation, what it bequeaths to "Ghana" is an impressive culturalist and racialist freight: in the earlier nationalist imaginings, if the Gold Coast nation is a nation of "African people," a people who express a racial soul-principle whose designation is "Ethiopian,"[5] these are some of the "authentic" values that "Ghana" takes on.

The foregoing should give an indication why, in the context reviewed by this study, it has been necessary to resolve the acts encoding a Ghana-to-be in writing as a

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[4] Hence, I put scare quotes around the name to emphasise its status for this study as an idea, an idea under imaginary construction.

[5] For a brief genealogy of "Ethiopia" in African nationalism, see Thomas Hodgkin, Nationalism in Colonial Africa (New York: New York UP, 1957) 180-181.

play of variations on a pre-existing idea-theme of nation, as so many processings that this idea-theme passes through as it figures a nation to come. In the name "Ghana," therefore, might be seen an ideal convergence of meanings and determinations: when this name arrives it assumes these as one assumes an inheritance. Thus "Ghana," in the writing, mirrors a by no means simple meaning-making process; and this involved process, unfolding in and over time, is that which reaches a culmination of sorts with the substantive nation.

Meaning-making is a projective activity. And thus to say "Ghana" is the terminus of a constellation of nationalist meanings, broad and narrow, must presuppose that these meanings have their being in a domain of projections. This domain is the imaginary; and it is that which stands behind and informs the writing of the nation. What occurs in the imaginary, as Castoriadis points out, does not belong to a dimension of the "fictive" or the "illusory"; rather what the imaginary proposes is a domain of active human imaginings that make for a collective positing of new forms. These imaginary forms circumscribe "a world" in which each human collective can then "inscribe itself and give itself a place." By this means social and cultural identification is secured through a "system of norms, institutions...values, orientations, and goals of collective life, as well as of individual life."[6]

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[6] Cornelius Castoriadis, "The Greek and the Modern Political Imaginary" Salmagundi 100 (Fall 1993): 102. (While I find Castoriadis' definition of the imaginary useful for my purposes, I must distance myself from the radically anti-historicist perspective he brings to history in this essay). Another cultural critic conceives of the imaginary as a social, culturally organized practice, thus to be understood as a "form of negotiation between sites of agency" and socio-historically defined (or given) "fields of possibility." See Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader, eds. P. Williams and L. Chrisman (New York: Columbia UP, 1994) 327.

The writing of and towards the nation, informed and impelled by the imaginary, expresses the blueprint (or impress), as it were, which is or will be the basis of the projects of nationalism in a historical, real-world setting. Writing, in other words, is a function of the imaginary. But this writing, to the extent that it intervenes between the imaginings and the (would-be) real-world projects of nationalism, means more. Inasmuch as it is an expressive proposition, it is also a middling (or inter-mediate) one. The writing of the one who, or that which collectively, writes is a mediation, so to speak, between the imaginary and the worldly; between a before and an after; between word and world; between a precondition and a projection which, as such, is to come. Situated in between, a middling writing, in effect, can be thought as an embodied transitivity (and if this construction is to be useful at all, then, in its terms, a middling writing must be grasped as that which "gives bodily form to," or that which "figures"). On the one hand, as embodied transitivity, a middling writing figures itself in that which already is--i.e., the imaginary precondition. On the other hand, as transitivity embodied, writing is a figuring forth of the imaginary is in the still to come. That is, a middling writing gives form to, and, in itself, points transitively towards the shape of, a worldly to come.

In this study, I hope to demonstrate in these categories--the expressive, the middling and the transitional--three characteristics which furnish crucial modes of identifying the agency that does the writing under review: a socio-historically placed African middle class.[7] This is a class whose self-definition has emerged more or less as nationalist; a class, that is, that has emerged in the writing as a part that figures itself in

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[7] I give the thesis of an African middle class a fuller review in Chapter 1.

an imaginary whole, namely, "the people", "the nation," "the race." Throughout this study, then, we will find a middle class nationalist writing that displaces into itself, and hence figurally embodies, a quest for an ideal of collectivity; a class that figures itself as the intermediate starting point of an imagined community, greater than, but included within and expressing, itself. And if "the nation" and "the (native) people" are the inscription of this communal ideal, what this ideal's imaginary priority enables a middle class nationalist writing to do is to define "people" (or popular nation) as the formal limit of a collective aspiration.[8]

Insofar, however, as the writing of the imagined community mirrors temporal process, as I point out above, the contexts of reading presented in this study reveal that it does not and cannot leave untroubled the people's symbolic definition as and within the limit of collective aspiration. What I am arguing in this study is that, within the limit, we find an imaginary of the popular nation whose definition can hardly be said to be given once and for all. On the contrary, this imaginary is reconstituted, undergoing shifts in definition inasmuch as time's changes alter the relation of forces in historical, real-world interactions. Hence, if this study shows a middle class nationalist writing founded in, and mediating, a more or less expressivist notion of "the (native) people" and "the nation"--orders and categories thought as such to be more or less unified in their being

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[8] On "people" and "nation," Greenfeld writes: "The words 'people' and 'nation' came into their modern use simultaneously, as synonyms. The meaning of the word 'nation' [in the early sixteenth century] was that of an 'elite of representatives,' and in this meaning it was applied, in England, to the population of the country. The equation of the two concepts symbolically elevated the populace to the position of an elite. The word 'people' acquired its lofty modern connotation (of the supreme object of loyalty, the bearer of sovereignty, and the basis of political solidarity) and lost the meaning of rabble that it invariably had before." Liah Greenfeld, "The Formation of the Russian National Identity: The Role of Status Insecurity and Ressentiment" Comparative Studies in Society and History 32.3 (July 1990): 549.

and becoming--it also makes room within this construction for the changes wrought by time. It makes room, that is, for a methodological relativism.

To bring an understanding of temporal relativity, and, based on this, a relativism in method, to this study as I do can only mean that its insights must constantly negotiate between the continuous of the infinitive "to write," as in writing the nation, and a pluralized gerund: writings of the nation. If the former gives a sense of an abstract continuum, a commonality that identifies all who write in a cumulative nationalist endeavour, the latter gives an indication that their endeavours, separated by and in time, are successive thematic and symbolic appropriations of the nation; that these, therefore, are appropriations which, in the writing, differentiate (or revise) the spatially bounded idea of a national people. Relativity along time, then, argues a method of reading the African nation for this study that is comparative; it argues, that is, a method able to relate a time before and a time after in a framework of similarity and difference.

As much as it unfolds in time, the writing of the African nation unfolds in space, too. What this argues for a comparative method is a need to broaden out to accommodate understandings of the object of this writing within relations of a larger space-time--or historical--kind. It is this kind of relational understanding that we find Edward Said bringing to bear on the question of Palestinian national identity in his After the Last Sky. The cultural critic ponders:

> When did we become "a people"? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one? What do these big questions have to do with our intimate relationships with each other and with others?

We might grasp the cultural understandings Said's acknowledged big questions imply by

setting them against what they could not possibly imply: a metaphysical understanding of the people. The latter would see "people" as a more or less pure, undifferentiated principle, resting on a solid bedrock of identity. Since this popular principle is assumed to beget its self-identity, it remains immune to the influence of others. A knowledge of it emerges, therefore, in terms of an "inside," insulated from, and in opposition more or less to, an "outside."[9]

Said's tough questions deny this formulation any validity. And for us who would reconstruct the writing of the African nation as it has unfolded and unfolds in circumstances not altogether dissimilar to the Palestinian one, what he proposes for our endeavour is "people" as a theme whose meaning is not wholly implicit to itself. That is, he proposes "people" as best thought and analyzed in terms of a problematically articulated whole. (And "articulation," we will recall, denotes a linking or coming together of different elements). The people, as they appear in the critic's questions, have their being not in a metaphysical always already but are constituted as a cultural problematic in history. And if history is that which requires to be understood in an ontology of time, space and power relations, it is these inescapable relativities that will always ensure that what emerges as the "will of the people"--a middle class in our case--never quite manages to fully coincide with its object. Both inside the space of the people, and in this inside's relation to the outside that impinges on it, power's repressions circulate, exclusionary interest operates, contestations develop: the people emerge as such

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[9] To this cf. the following recent critique: "The 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it." See Homi K. Bhabha, "Narrating the Nation," in Nation and Narration (London and New York: Routledge, 1990) 4.

in an economy as much conflictual as it is consensual.

Said's questions imply more. The analytic trajectory they follow propose "people" in an overlapping series of existences. In one existence, "people" is a "whole" unto itself (hence an immediate Palestinian or Ghanaian people). In another it lives an inter-mediate existence: the people are a wholly imagined part of another "whole" (hence a Palestinian people are an Arab people, just as a Ghanaian people are an African people). And still this inter-mediate proposition, in yet another existence, is a "whole" whose meaning is alienated in part into that which represents the ulterior limit in which it is possible to imagine "a people" at all: a mediate world (of peoples)--or what today we call a global modernity.[10] Thus, following the trajectory of the critic's big questions, we arrive at the outline of a conjunctural whole in which popular self and others, locality and globality--with all the intermediations we can imagine between them--might be thought in serial and mutually constitutive relationships.

This insight accompanies me below, where I collapse a popular idea of "Ghana" and its writing into the expanded outline of a comparatively derived African modernity. If Said foresees just such an endeavour, one that begins with the immediate question "when did we become a people?" and goes on to the expansive "what [has being or becoming a people] got to do with our relations...with others?," so do I. However, with regard to the opening question, I alter the perspective slightly. I ask, instead: what

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[10] Hence Said's call elsewhere--a call I endorse--for "analytic pluralism" as an eclectic method of reading that would flesh out objects of cultural inquiry--like "people"--in the round. What analytic pluralism implies is a differential, inter- or cross-disciplinary articulation of the cultural object such that it emerges as a cross-hatched whole. And this procedure is what I attempt to follow in this study. On the concept, see Said's The World, the Text and the Critic (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1983), esp. p. 171.

watershed date and event confirmed our African peoplehood? And the date that readily suggests itself is the epoch making one of March 6, 1957. On this day, the Gold Coast gained its independence from British rule, and with this came a change of name symbolically denoting the transition from erstwhile colonial status to national status: the Gold Coast became Ghana.

But what, to proceed in the Saidian spirit of serial, expanded inquiry, did this confirmation of the status of national peoplehood establish beyond a merely Ghanaian immediacy?

Independence for Ghana was the first crowning success of a long anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggle in black Africa. As such it marked a critical African watershed with regard to the end of what Cornel West, referring to a period of virtually unchallenged European global authority, has called the "Age of Europe." It is this Age, starting from the fifteenth century and the beginnings of Europe's globe-transforming discoveries of new worlds, that had seen European modernity asserting its significance as a global heritage. And, in the assertion, this heritage of the modern would be expressed in and through the dominating relations of imperialism and colonialism that Europeans established and exercised over three-quarters of the globe, including, especially after the 1880s, the greater portion of the African continent.

It is against this backdrop that, for many commentators, as the premier moment signalling the supersession of direct European authority in the last continental bastion of colonial-imperialism, the transition from the Gold Coast to Ghana in 1957--one to be repeated subsequently all over Africa--held great significance for political modernity.

This significance, to take just one early example, is explored at some length in David Apter's The Gold Coast in Transition (subsequently, Ghana in Transition).[11] A tension between the political and the anthropological in Apter's explanations, however, finally denies the thesis of the modern a comprehensive basis in his account of a Gold Coast/Ghana in transition. It is left to the great pan-Africanist, C. L. R. James, assessing Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution (1962), to correct Apter's oversight and assert without apology that: "The people and the continent of Africa today are a part of the modern world."[12] What, contra Apter, James' revisionist reading of Ghana proposes is that, to the extent that its achievement of nationhood can be predicated of a collectively designated African people, these people should be thought as having taken on a certain attribution--the modern in a comprehensive sense.

As I will show throughout this study, this claim to a national modernity that is African--and it is upon this claim that, like James, I try to read "Ghana" into an African modernity--is derived in a twofold manner. First, is an Africa in modernity. This we might think of as the construction of a (sociological) objectivity: the continent and people of post-imperial Africa cannot help but be a part of what, in the last five hundred years, has shaped out as the structure of a global modernity. What this means is that the continent today, to a greater or lesser degree, is a participant in, and "beneficiary" of,

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[11] David Apter, The Gold Coast in Transition (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1955); Ghana in Transition 2nd rev. ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1972).

[12] C. L. R. James, Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution (London: Allison and Busby, 1977) 36. See pp. 61-62 for James' critique of Apter.

those attributes of the modern identified in Weberian sociology: "rationalization"[13] and "the spirit of capitalism," elements both of European provenance.

If, as Giddens pointedly observes, "modernity is inherently globalizing," modernity in this formulation, as Jameson argues elsewhere, also substitutes as a euphemism for a capitalist dynamic.[14] And it is capitalism, borne on the back of European empire-building in the last five hundred years--and this makes imperialism the expression and disseminator of the spirit of capitalism around the globe--that has tended, wherever its imperatives have landed it, to impose rationalized social-structural and cultural attributes along the European lines. Today, in a post-imperial era, the elements of European science and technology, European-style bureaucratization, literacy, governmental and state forms, functional differentiation,[15] etc., are a functioning part of the African reality, as much as they are a part of an increasingly rationalized global system.

It is this globalizing (thrust) of European rationality that led Weber, early in our century, to ponder as he opened his The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism:

> A product of modern European civilization, studying any problem of universal history is bound to ask himself to what combination of

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[13] In Weberian sociology, rationalization refers to a more or less precise mathematization of means and ends that raises social organization, socio-economic relations, science and technology, the arts, etc., from a lower to a higher power of expression.

[14] See Anthony Giddens, The Consequences of Modernity (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990) 63. Frederic Jameson's comment appears in his "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" Social Text 15 (Fall 1986): 68.

[15] In the sociology of modernity, functional differentiation refers to the dissociation from one another of the institutional spheres of politics, economy, science, law, education and religion, each, then, becoming an autonomously functioning system in its own right. See Greg Jusdanis, Belated Modernity and Aesthetic Culture (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) xii-xiii.

> circumstances the fact should be attributed that in Western civilization, and in Western civilization only, cultural phenomena have apppeared which (as we like to think) lie in a line of development having universal significance.[16]

Weber's hesitation--it registers in the parenthetic "as we like to think"--points to what he himself might seem to reveal elsewhere[17]: that Europe's line of development into the "universal" is not a merely natural one. The globalization of European rationality--modernization, that is--follows a logic of force: it is a consequence of the colonial and the imperial bearing down on non-European others. If so we must re-read the "universal" as a projective mythology: the universal as such represents Europe's exceptional being for and towards the world. By and through this mythology Europe reflexively rationalizes (or naturalizes) into cultural authorization the force--i.e., the imperial and the colonial--that bears it into global dominion. It is an observation that leads to the second sense brought to the modern in this study--its realization in and as a projective mythology, and the inscription of this mythology at large in the heritage consolidated in the Age of Europe.

Europe, reading its exceptionality into the universal, reveals a desire to self-authorize on the side of the dominant. But what of Europe's Others, the Others dominated and de-authorized by the former's assumption of the authority of the universal? We must be prepared to acknowledge--and this is what this study's first

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[16] See Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (London: Unwin, 1968) 13.

[17] "The fate of an epoch that has eaten of the tree of knowledge," writes Weber, "is that general views of life and the universe...the highest ideals, which move us most forcefully, are always formed only in the struggle with other ideals which are just as sacred to others as ours are to us." Cited by David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity (Cambridge, Mass. and Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) 1.

chapter does--that a comparative desire emerges on the side of the dominated Others so that they are able to take the proposition of the universal in the exceptional and turn it into a datum of creative resistance. This is the point Fanon, for instance, argues in The Wretched of the Earth. According to the theorist of the nationalist revolution in Africa, the cultural-political struggle waged by the colonized native of Africa against his European colonizer is staked on premises that make the desire of both antagonists twin. It follows, therefore, that "the effort of the native to rehabilitate himself and escape from colonialism is logically inscribed from the same point of view as colonialism." If the universalist culture of colonial Europe is erected on a de-authorization of African culture, then, as Fanon concludes: "the unconditional affirmation of African culture has succeeded the unconditional affirmation of European culture."[18] In place of Fanon's "unconditional" we may substitute "universalist" without changing the meaning of his claim.

Inasmuch as for Fanon, reading in an era of decolonization, the African nation's coming into being equals its universalist affirmation, for James, reading "the Ghana revolution," the universalist affirmation of Africa in nationhood translates the continent into the condition of the modern itself. That is to say, in claiming the modern for Africa, James intends the main emphasis to fall on a continent that is so because it makes its exceptional being and empowers it as part or partner in the projects defined in the universal. Here, to emphasise the point once more, the modern points not so much towards an objectivity as it is a claim to a share in the projective mythology woven out of this objectivity. As for this modernist mythology it is the one that newly resolves the

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[18] Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth 212-213.

attribute "human" in terms of a collective self that possesses itself in a world-creating universality, and is presumed, in possessing itself thereby, to have attained the furthest reach of humanity. We might conclude with James that, if nation is woven into a mythological fabric of the modern, it is precisely that attribute which, inasmuch as it confirms the peoplehood of Africans, also confers on them a modern status.

With James, then, we can see behind and informing the objective political order of the African nation and the anti-colonial struggle that gives birth to it, a broad causality defined in a cultural modernity--that domain of imaginary, symbolic and discursive exchanges where Europe and a non-Europe encounter each other, albeit in asymmetrical fashion. If we are to fully articulate the African nation as a cultural-political datum in modernity in these terms--as I try to do in this study using the model of "Ghana"--historical cause (anti-colonial struggle) and effect (substantive nation) beg to be examined in terms of a historically grounded comparative anthropology of that mythological space emergent between Europe and Africa. It calls, that is, for a critical cultural inquiry into the modern as its mythology has come to lie between and, in this mutual implication, shape the imaginary, discursive and political constructions in which Africa and Europe circulate. This is what this study tries to do. And I would hope that such an investigation, conceived in the large, nevertheless constantly returns us to the immediate questions--when did we become a people?; or are we in the process of becoming one?; where have we failed in becoming one?--as themes profoundly shaping and shaped by our comparative being in modernity.

In the foregoing, I have attempted to sketch the beginnings of a comprehensive set of themes in terms of which we might read the African nation and its writing. What remains to be done, it goes without saying, is to give what is rendered abstractly here a grounding, with regard to this writing, in the actualities of nationalist practice. This is what the chapters that follow do, bringing an empirical, but withal keenly reflective, focus to the questions and issues implied at large above. These questions and issues, in other words, begin to gain a specific outline and address as I try to map out answers to the following: who is the native who writes the nation; and from which stratum or location, sociologically speaking, does the writer's endeavour emanate? Out of what existential, historical and cultural circumstances does the nation and its writing impose their necessity? In these same terms, then, towards what does and must the nation in the writing gesture?

With the emphasis now on this now on that, these questions recur throughout this study. Considered all together, however, they go especially into the organization of Chapter 1, which is titled in part "A Modernist Heritage of Writing Nativity, Class and Nation." I mean the emphasis in the chapter to fall on the "heritage" in the title, a proposition of continuity that allows me, inasmuch as I put the activities of nationalists from the Gold Coast in the foreground, to distribute the endeavour and meaning of an African(ist) literary nationalism between those who might be viewed as pioneers and their more contemporary heirs. This exercise is in keeping with the comparative principle that I have noted earlier above as a central feature of this study: to play the early and the recent (and ongoing) against and in terms of each other can only refamiliarize us with

a past "forgotten" because it has been inadequately theorized into present endeavour. The deployment of the comparative principle, I hope, therefore, will help us to gain a keener understanding of what we mean by (claiming to be) "African," in relation to ourselves, and what that claim, in its realization as the search for an "African world," projects onto cultural modernity at large (i.e., our relations with others).

In Chapter 2, the canvas might appear to shrink somewhat as I take a historical look at "The [Nationalist] Road to Ghana." In reality, the investigation is informed by the larger picture, and the historical road to Ghana is read in one dimension as the projective imperative of African modernity defining itself in a particular setting: colonial Gold Coast. Against the colonialist backdrop, however, what I see in this unfolding self-definition is not a smooth road but a tortuous one. In effect, in history I look not for the disposition of sequential event as such as, within that, for circumstantial relations of power--appearing now as constraint, now as bestowal--and how, within these relations, more or less conscious agencies--now contesting, now cooperating with, each other--operate keenly to mould history's eventfulness to fit particular interests and designs. My reading of the road to Ghana in these terms is able to hint at a paradox, a genealogical paradox one might say, in the birthing of this national idea. We might render this paradox in terms of the operation of colonialist constraint in modernist bestowal. And to the extent that I read "Ghana" as a metonym and sub-theme of "Africa," this is a logic which I index to the projects at large of African modernity.

In Chapter 3, I attempt to give the paradox whose bare outline appears in Chapter 2 a fuller elaboration. If I do so in a revelation of a colonialist premise in the modern

and a modernist promise in the colonial, much more crucial is locating the ways in which this problematic doubling is convergent in, and hence identifies, that positionality in-between--the middle class one referred to--that assumes the burden of writing the African nation. As in Chapter 1, the method of investigation is an explicitly comparative one. Unlike Chapter 1, however, where past and present are linked in an, as it were, "reassuring" continuum of nationalist endeavour, this chapter is designed to reveal the linkage between the two--in what I conceptualize above as a genealogical paradox--in rather more problematic terms.

What emerges in the paradoxical reading, then, shows the configuration of a colonialist modernity in which the (middle class) past is necessarily inscribed; and it shows as well as the necessary relation of this past to what I define as present necessity. Present necessity I try to realize in a twofold fashion: first, I labour under an impulse to re-view our contemporary post-colonial problem of more or less failed nation-making in the past (or precondition) which, both in spite and because of its ambivalence, gave birth to the idea of the African nation. In that sense, I read prospect in retrospect. As I do so, I try to give an account of how the paradox structuring the middle class being is either ideologically managed and contained or caused to be repressed by those apparatuses of a colonialist modernity--the school dispensing European-style literacy, for instance--in which the class being is caught.

The second dimension of present necessity I conceive as the need in our time to wrest something enabling--what I call beginning--out of and in spite of a compromised past. Here, the kind of reading I do is analogous to what takes place in the

psychoanalytic session involving analyst and patient. In the session, the analyst is the one who, in a preparatory sense, is called upon to read a repressed, or unconscious, or latent content (i.e., a precondition, that which predisposes towards) out of a manifest content (i.e., the outwardly visible condition). What is foreseen is a patient who, thus "read," can thenceforth properly assume the burden of his or her history.

If I read the (middle class) past towards the present as analyst reads his or her patient's history, this exercise indeed owes not a little to this past itself. Hence Chapter 3 acknowledges a middle that in the past had come to an understanding of its own (colonial) present and its future (i.e., the nation-to-come) in terms of the possible negative cultural consequences of the ambivalent precondition, that structure of a colonialist modernity, in the make-up of the class being. Pointing to the traumatic implications of such self-knowledge, Sara Suleri observes: "Colonialism...signifies an advent of such disruptive modernity that culture itself acquires the attributes of nation."[19] For my own ends in this work, I travesty the overall argument of the cultural critic somewhat by taking her point here to mean that to the extent that an exogenous colonialism dominates the indigenous culture and rends it traumatically open--that is, radically divided within itself--it imposes on the alienated native the necessity of beginning a search, looking in the attribute of modern nationality (and the modern here should be read as a figure of empowerment), for a renewed mode of cultural "closure" and self-disclosure.

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[19] Sara Suleri, The Rhetoric of English India (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992) 8.

Nation then reads as affirmative possibility for the native's nativity[20]; and this possibility is expressed out of and through the very liability--that traumatic doubling in a colonialist modernity--that structures his or her divided cultural self. But if we render nation as that which is to come--a goal, an end--expressed out of that which was and is--hence, that which occupies a beginning and a transitional middle--what emerges is nation as a narrative structure. And that structure gives itself as the one which Jameson, reading "third-world literature," refers to as national allegory.[21] If so, Chapter 4 reads the emergence of the national allegory out of the traumatic colonialist pre-text elaborated in Chapter 3. If J. E. Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound is the premier example of the African national allegory, it also provides the occasion to examine--as Suleri would have it--the culturalist claims of nationhood as it is built around and into an Africanist discourse of nativism.

Finally, in Chapter 5, I look at Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah as continuing the claims made, and the prerogatives established, by a middle class in the nationalist allegory--namely, those of the self that represents the social totality, the part

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[20] Throughout this study, when I refer to nativity, I mean to point to the (varied) ethnocultural sphere from which the endogenous realities of the African continent draw their breath and sustenance. Nativity is the preserve of what has been imagined by cultural nationalism as Tradition. But it is also that which, as we have seen and shall see, has been fated to have projections speculatively and literally mapped onto and over its being. To the extent that these projections have had profound material and cultural consequences on the ground, nativity has experienced, to a greater or lesser degree, qualitatively new modes of alienation. The native middle class that I posit in this study is a product of this alienation.

[21] Jameson, overstating his case somewhat, argues that "All third-world texts are necessarily...allegorical...[And] even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic--necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society." See Frederic Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," Social Text 15 (Fall 1986): 15. We can index what Jameson says back and give it a relevance to a time when "third-world" and "first-world" had not been invented but had a de facto "existence" in the relations between colony and metropole.

(middle class) that represents the whole (native people). Continuity notwithstanding, looking at Nkrumah's pragmatic secular idealism in relation to the conservative metaphysical idealism of Hayford before him enables us to see how the former proposes the nationalist allegory in a radically revisionist framework. A middle class nationalism redefined as to tactics and goals is the basis of Nkrumah's successful politicking. If this politicking marks the beginning of the end of direct colonial rule in Africa, the writing of the nation in Ghana is able to affirm a middle class sense of culmination, of modernist arrival in substantive nation-statehood.

But has this sense of arrival, this sense that the processes of nationalist meaning-making have finally cohered into something substantive, been sustained a generation into Independence?

The conclusion, pursuing an answer to this question, draws together the many strands running through the various chapters into a reflection on the heritage reflected in the writing of "Ghana" and the African nation at large. Thus, if this study properly ends with decolonization in the late-1950s and the 1960s, what this reflection means is a looking beyond the moment of the crowning achievement of middle class nationalism to see what has become of the promise of this class in our here and now, the 1990s. And if what C. L. R. James--the man for whom the projects of African nationalism could only reveal Africa's comparative modernity--calls the "Ghana(-African) revolution" emerges largely in our time as the spectacle of a failed revolution, then the conclusion speculates on the wherefore of this failure of our modernist enterprise. Finally, since we cannot help but be and/or live in the modern, the conclusion, drawing on a revolutionary strand

of African nationalist thinking, explores, if only in a tentative fashion, the terms in which Africa's compact with the modern--as it has been and is conducted through the nation and its writing--might be rethought and renegotiated.

CHAPTER 1

"AFRICA" IN A GOLD COAST CULTURALIST AND NATIONALIST IMPERATIVE OF "WORLDING"

A Modernist Heritage of Writing Nativity, Class and Nation

> [T]he task I [have] set myself [is] to reduce into writing the Customary Laws and Usages of the... inhabitants of the Gold Coast.
>
> --John Mensah Sarbah, Fanti Customary Laws

> The secular vision in African creative writing...combines the re-creation of a pre-colonial African world-view with eliciting its transposable elements into modern potential.
>
> --Wole Soyinka, Myth, Literature and the African World

If the turn of the last century and the early part of the twentieth are remembered as the seed time of nationalism in colonial Africa, the notable contributions in socio-political and cultural thought and expression made by the small, indigenous literati of the Gold Coast to the nationalist awakening assures this group a central place in such remembrance. Following the pioneering paths beaten in the mid- to late-nineteenth century in the works of such stalwarts as Edward Wilmot Blyden of Liberia, widely regarded as the founding father of African nationalism, and James Africanus Horton, Sierra Leone nationalist and West African patriot, turn of the century Gold Coast, then under British colonial rule, had witnessed a spectacular efflorescence of nationalist

writing--spectacular for coming from such a small group--in the areas of polemical journalism, ethno-history, law, pedagogy and creative literature.

The outstanding figures among the native Gold Coast literati of the period, figures who seem effortlessly to have combined the roles of political, cultural and literary nationalist, include John Mensah Sarbah, J. E. Casely Hayford and Rev. S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma. Sarbah's landmark Fanti Customary Laws appeared in 1897, and was followed by his Fanti Law Reports (1904) and Fanti National Constitution (1906). The initiative of Sarbah at ethnocultural map-making is subsequently taken up and given a more ambitious brief by Casely Hayford in his Gold Coast Native Institutions (1903). Before his major legal-political treatise, The Truth About the West African Land Question (1914), and other works, Hayford will put the struggles that have animated his lifework together in his classic quasi-fictional autobiography Ethiopia Unbound (1911). In that same year Attoh Ahuma, who earlier in 1905 had issued his Memoirs of West African Celebrities, will publish The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness, this last being a collection of the author's editorial essays drawn from the newspaper The Gold Coast Leader.

I give special mention to these works in this opening chapter not so much because they happen as a matter of fact to occupy the inaugural moment of nationalism in a Ghanaian-African context. Rather, as I embark on a quest to formulate a meaningful relationship between writing and the African nation, I see in these early works much that is definitive. For they provide valuable first insights wherein we can understand the subsequent unfolding of the literary-cultural history of the Ghana they anticipate as a

development interior to a tradition of call and response, thesis and revision, proposition and debate, point and counterpoint; a development that belongs in the province of what has been, and continues to be, known generally as African nationalism. I devote these introductory pages, then, to looking into the works of these authors from colonial Gold Coast--works hinting at a Ghanaian nation in the prospect--for the peculiar circumstances of demand and the modes and patterns of historical and textual filiation that write the inception of the African nation and guarantees its continuous discursivity.

Taken in their full reality as historical-textual events, therefore, these late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Gold Coast works enable this study to pose and address its inaugural question: within what existential realities does nation (begin to) speak its significances, and speak them as "African"? Pursuing the broad-ranging answer that the question demands means going beyond the status of these texts as unique events and performances. For this reason, I will attempt here and in the chapters following to seek out of them opportunities to conduct a general reconstruction of the intertextual circumstances, the historical preconditions and the cultural-political challenges wherein appear the what and how--that is to say, the impersonal givens--and the why and who--that is to say, the not-so impersonal agencies--that conspire to write the nation.

It is Marx who, without impugning the transforming power of human action in and on the world, observes in a secular reading of history that the effectivity of such action is possible only within, and hence is circumscribed by, historical limits.[1] In a gloss

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[1] Marx writes: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past." Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York: International Publishers, 1963) 15.

on Marxian secular historicism, Cornel West has observed:

> [G]iven a historical situation, structural constraints impose limits upon historically constituted agents, whereas conjunctural opportunities can be enacted by these agents. Given the historical process, many structural constraints can become conjunctural opportunities.[2]

In this study the understanding I bring to the interactions between givenness and agency--as they relate to the what and the how, the why and the who that define the writing of the African nation--is precisely the one outlined by West.

As this study negotiates between what the past gives to the present--those circumstances not directly chosen--and the present agents and agencies that find themselves compelled and committed to remoulding and transforming this given; as I read between being and becoming, that is, I will attempt to insert a descriptive name, a mediating term that as such participates in both. I have proposed this as a middle class in the Introduction and it is through this designation that I mean to fix the socio-historical location of the specific individuals--initially Sarbah, Hayford, Attoh Ahuma, but also others who come before and after them--who incarnate the writing of the nation. As for an interpretation of the ontological configuration of this middle, I leave it for when I come to discuss Sarbah's work, which is shortly below.

What do I mean by "class" and what pertinences do I wish the term to carry for this study? By class I refer to a group of persons identifiable according to the

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[2] Cornel West, "Marxist Theory and the Specificity of Afro-American Oppression," in Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grosberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 24. Cf. also the Chinese-American critic, Rey Chow citing Wlad Godzich: "Givenness is something 'we must understand...not as a passive (or a resultative, in the linguistic sense of the term) but as an active principle. Givenness is agency. As such it never gives itself but is figured in that which is given, and it is knowable through its figurations.'" Rey Chow, Woman and Chinese Modernity (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991) xii.

determinants--those impersonal givens--of history and society as formed by and within the same processes. Additionally, I think of class as a term that abstracts persons who hold, or have come to hold, similar attitudes and ideologies towards self and society from their mere individuality. The class relation, then, takes such persons, their attitudes and ideologies, beyond their discrete individuality, turning these attributes into something whose effectivity (or lack thereof) is analysable as pertaining to a concrete whole; that is, analysable as a formal content belonging to a more or less coherently articulated--which is not to say a seamless--historic bloc.

Especially in the context under review in this study, the class-bound individuals I am thinking of are related first by virtue of coming out of, and hence sharing, a similar socio-historical predicament. This is the given, and it forms the basis upon which is subsequently generated a socio-historical perspective that conspires to shape the aspirations, such as those contained in the ideas and ideologies of nation-ness, that come to be shared between them. I am arguing in effect that, out of the given socio-historical bases, the nationalist ideologies and pieties self-consciously constituted and held by these individuals represent them for a class; and this class in turn is represented for itself, and for others, in the generation, consolidation and revision by class-individuals of a more or less ideologically coherent socio-historical perspective.

This much we may construe from Attoh Ahuma's The Gold Coast Nation which, as the title suggests, is an assertion of Gold Coast nation-ness by the author in the teeth of colonial denial. The structure of the colonial predicament which furnishes the modality of demand from within which this work begins appears in a question in its opening essay:

"But, if we are a Nation [that is, we of the Gold Coast], are we self-conscious?"[3] "We" in this case represents those to and on behalf of whom the work is "especially" addressed: an aspirant "rising generation" of European- and generally Western-educated Africans. If this rising generation constitutes the special class-audience of The Gold Coast Nation, this is because, according to the author, on them has uniquely fallen the "birthright, privilege, duty, destiny and honour" of seeking out the effective bases of a post-colonially reconceived Gold Coast nation.[4] Nation, in Attoh Ahuma's wake-up call to the rising generation, is the projection of a class destiny. Furthermore, it assumes the shape of a narrative burden such that, within the aspirant imaginary of the rising generation, the national destiny is borne, of a necessity, on the back of a collective class character. Of Attoh Ahuma and a middle class characterology, more presently.[5]

Throughout this study we will seek to know in what manner and to what ends writers like Attoh Ahuma, self-conscious agents of a class character, have re-articulated

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[3] Rev. S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness (London: Frank Cass, 1971) 1.

[4] Attoh Ahuma, The Gold Coast Nation vii.

[5] By "characterology" I mean a deliberately conceived project of moulding, or re-forming, "character." The two terms fall in the province where human behaviours, responses and dispositions are so manipulated and so mediated as to adequate a "primordial" self to social arrangements. Character then might be thought as the self brought within the disciplinary and hegemonic purview of institutional pre-arrangements--civilization, culture, society, and so on. In this sense, building character--characterology--necessarily knows the displacement of allegory: the individual self is moulded and disciplined not for its own sake (though ideological demands may obscure this fact) but for the sake of reproducing social formations, of confirming and furthering the normative force of civilizational and cultural institutions, or Tradition. It goes without saying that in the context under review in this study, because of a long-standing problem of colonial alienation, what I refer to as the nationalist characterology of a middle class necessarily begins as a foundational quest for norm-making institutions that will adequate self and society, word and world. As I indicate in many places in this study, characterology is a "site" contested by social groups vying for hegemony as well as by factions within such groups. (For a relevant analysis of characterology, see Wilson Harris's comparative "Tradition and the West Indian Novel," in Tradition, the Writer and Society London and Port of Spain: New Beacon Books, 1967, esp. p. 29).

the historically given. Within the nationalist rubric that shapes the possibilities and defines the limits of this class character, we will investigate the ways in which the terms of re-articulation that these writers have appropriated and (re-)invented and with which they seek to modify the given reality, have helped to name and, more or less, consolidate a class tradition with its recognizable modes of expression. And we will work towards a definition of how, by virtue of the figurative energy employed by these writers to name their class location and to plot the trajectory of its destiny as nationalist in essence, the very location of a nationalist class has come to acquire a self-consciously creative and/or interrogative social function and effectivity.

What I mean to institute then, by way of these opening propositions, is that, in the context under review in this study, nation speaks its significances first as a class reality, a modernist class reality. To the extent that it is also true that, within this reality, the class that speaks the significances of the nation is compelled to speak them more or less as "African," it is a middle class of nationalists, then--a class, so to speak, that has sought and taken out a patent on "Africa"--that we must look for the wherefores that this broad culturalist and nationalist construct signifies. How, then, might we arrive at the significances inhering in this Africa that comes bearing a modernist class patent?

In my prefatory and introductory remarks, I have suggested that Africa might be understood as a thematic within, drawing on, and giving a specific nationalist mediation to, a general problematic of the modern. As regards this general problematic, I have proposed also that it should be thought as giving itself in a mythology of "the universal." Hence, it is in terms of a universalist dynamic that we might begin to think of the

wherefores of Africa and the African as they take shape in the modernist class reality: African modernity understood against this backdrop, then, as an (ongoing) middle class culturalist and nationalist project defined in, but also defining for and towards itself, the universal. In the next few paragraphs, I will look in a summary fashion at Mensah Sarbah's turn of the century work as providing an archetype of sorts for this project. As I work my way towards a comprehensive cultural-nationalist definition of African modernity in the universalist derivation presented here, I hope, furthermore, to locate in the writings of the pioneer Gold Coast nationalist elements that admit a fruitful comparison with the farreaching work of his "heir" Wole Soyinka, the contemporary Nigerian writer and Nobel laureate. The Soyinka I present here is especially the Soyinka who has been re-read, in an essay titled "The Myth of an African World," by the Ghanaian philosopher and cultural critic Kwame Anthony Appiah.

Sarbah's two major works represent a reduction to writing by the author of the customary observances that define the lifeworld of his Fanti people (a subgroup of the Akan ethnic group in today's Ghana). A keenly felt sense of urgency accompanies the timing of the appearance of these works. For if up until the time Sarbah wrote, these native observances had been expressed overwhelmingly in the oral tradition, it was felt by not a few that this was a tradition threatening to go under as a result of the powerful encroachments on it by the forms of Anglo-European political and cultural expression.[6]

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[6] In the preface to his Fanti National Constitution (London: Frank Cass, 1968), Sarbah observes that the Mfantsi Amanbuhu Fekuw (Fanti National Political Society)--of which he was a founding member in 1889--having become "dissatisfied with the demoralizing effects of certain European influences, determined to stop further encroachments into their nationality" (xvii). From the parochial Fanti focus of its beginnings, the Fekuw will later broaden out to become the proto-nationalist Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society in 1897.

The threat posed by these forms notwithstanding, Sarbah's codification of orally expressed custom in writing represents a major concession on the part of the European-educated native to rehabilitate the world of "tradition" into the rationality of modern expression. If this rationality, in the first instance, was of European imposition, it also constituted as such a not insignificant part of the heritage of the educated native, as he was known at the turn of the century.

What Fanti Customary Law and Fanti National Constitution represent, then, is Sarbah's reconciliation of his doubly given reality--comprising native and European, old and new, worlds--a reconciliation within, but also looking beyond, the prestigious and authoritative terms furnished by the exogenous European heritage that came with his education. But what did this looking beyond consist in?

Well before Sarbah's works appeared, Blyden had suggested how the modalities of this looking beyond might be thought. In 1881, the doyen of African nationalism had found occasion to propose in an inaugural address, "The Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans," that the heritage of Europe had a general, that is to say a "human," priority. Blyden would argue the point on the basis that "culture is one, and the general effects of true culture are the same." But if in these terms he looked towards a humanistic appropriation of the European heritage towards African pedagogical ends, he wanted also to demonstrate to his audience that it is in the exception that the general rule is proved. Hence, he is quick to assert that "the native capacities of mankind differ, and their work and destiny differ." Thus:

> The special road which has led to the success and the elevation of the Anglo-Saxon is not that which which will lead to the success and the

> elevation of the Negro, though we shall resort to the same means of general culture which has enabled the Anglo-Saxon to find out for himself the way in which he ought to go.[7]

Blyden, we might say, advances two claims here on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon. First that his culture is exceptional; and, second, that this culture in its exceptionality (as captured in "special road") had arrived at a consistency with the general, a consistency that conferred on it paradigmatic status (or authorization in the general/universal).

On these claims, then, are borne Blyden's logic of the exceptional Negro who had to find his way as such into the general (or universal). If he needed to use the "same means" as the familiar Anglo-Saxon, this is to the extent that the latter's culture in its elevation (i.e., into paradigmatic status) pointed in the same direction in which others, following different paths, might go. For Blyden, the question then is one of the Negro's discriminating appropriation of the (universalist) paradigm represented by Europe as his exceptionality strove to reach the same: his own paradigmatic self-constitution.

Coming after Blyden's, Sarbah's writings argue similar premises. The Gold Coast nationalist's textualization of customary orality presupposes a judicious appropriation of the exogenous paradigm, one that searches for a way through it on behalf of the native element so that this element will arrive at a consistency with--i.e., authorization in--the general. The work of the latter thus constitutes an early and by no means easy attempt to fashion that which might become a "native modernity," a structure that foreseees the empowerment of the native (or "African") in an adaptation of its exceptionality towards

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[7] Edward W. Blyden, "The Aims and Methods of a Liberal Education for Africans: Inaugural Address as President of Liberia College, delivered at Monrovia, 5 January 1881," Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1967) 83.

the generality envisioned through the Anglo-European paradigm.

Sarbah's modernist "going Fantee"[8] will prove greatly to have been a salutary exercise, for his work assures the textual survival and transmission of customary orality and pre-eminently helps to author and authorize what subsequently has been formalized as the Ghanaian customary law. In effect, as a result of his timely retrieval and rehabilitation of the immemorial world of nativity, this world is empowered to take on an active life in the new, a consequence which otherwise--and the point was unanimously appreciated by a self-conscious turn of the century native literati--would have been doubtful. Rehabilitated by the early nationalist, native custom and tradition come to exert a not insignificant influence on the colonialist forms of European modernity impinging on and altering the shape of the old world. It is as a consequence that I seize Sarbah's works as archetypally proffering the outlines of what a universalist modernity, re-formed towards the renewal of indigenous Africa--hence African modernity--might look like.

Taking Sarbah's works as early African examples of the attempt to work out a reconciliation between the native and the modern must leave us with outstanding questions to clarify. For instance, what relationship does the reconciliation argue between the "native" and the "African"? How, in effect, do we negotiate the transition from the early nationalist's structure of a "nativized" modernity (or, for that matter, modernized nativity) to speaking about the same structure as corresponding to "African" modernity?

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[8] The expression "to go Fantee" is a pejorative invented by British administrators in colonial West Africa. For the whites it was meant to evoke the horror of sinking below culture and civilization, defined as the property of Europe, and regressing into "barbarous" African ways. In the Euro-African setting, the most notorious literary representative of the syndrome must surely be Conrad's atavistic Kurtz in Heart of Darkness. Sarbah's work, given this prior context, could be seen as rescuing his ethnos from the pejorative meanings that had been attached to its name.

We might think of the answers as figured in the national in the title of Sarbah's 1906 work Fanti National Constitution, a work which could just as well have been titled Fanti Native Constitution. The crucial change from native to national suggests that in the latter Sarbah is looking to renew the former; looking to rehabilitate the native, that is, towards paradigmatic status.[9] It is in this nationalist implication, therefore, that we might begin to resolve the link between the categories native and African. Nation, that is to say, might be thought as conducting culturalist traffic between the native and the African in a manner that foresees a transformation of the latter to a universalist paradigm, a paradigm to which the former--and the class that proposes the nation--will stand in a metonymic relationship.

What these inaugural questions, organized around Sarbah's work, permit us to begin to do is visualize class and nation in a dimension of cultural originality. Here we see the latter (nation) bestowing on the former (class) a conceptual space, an imaginary geography, to be speculatively filled with projections; projections which, because they give themselves as ideally fulfillable, are to be given substance over time. Culturalist idealizations of this sort, as we shall find presently, preoccupy Kwame Appiah as he brings his critical intelligence to bear on questions of original endeavour as they relate to the work of Soyinka in particular and to that of the "African" writer in general.

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[9] Consider, for instance, Sarbah's reaction to the politics of abuse of the term "native" in Fanti Constitution x. Kimble quotes a correspondent who wrote in the 4 Jan. 1919 edition of West Africa: "The meaning of the word as applied by the European to the native African is -- Native: primitive, backward, undeveloped, uncivilized..." Kimble also cites the 3-10 Dec. 1914 edition of the newspaper The Gold Coast Nation which suggested that "on a much vexed question...the use of the word 'Native' in substitution for 'African' is bad taste and should be discontinued." See David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana (Oxford: OUP, 1963) 540.

Before we take on the significances of Appiah's reading of the African writer and extend them in new directions we will do well to remember that "nation" when it appears in modern Africanist discourse in the mid- to late-nineteenth century comes exigently to fill a created vacuum. Thus, as in the turn of the century and early-century examples of Gold Coast writings under review here, nation appears at the behest of a relatively young tradition of naming Africa as a political and cultural reality, a fledgling tradition struggling to assert itself against a longer-lived and perdurable one coming from outside the continent. As for the latter tradition its content had been formed through a systematic emptying of a pristine African continent of any genuinely historical and cultural--human, that is--reality.

The authoritative pronouncements of G. W. F. Hegel in 1822 concerning Africa--subsequently published in The Philosophy of History--these for instance, are typical of this exogenous tradition's content. To this day Hegel's pronouncements have continued to lend a dubious philosophical respectability to the denigration en masse of the manifold realities of the continent. Thus Hegel on his singular Africa:

> In...Africa there can really be no history...There is no goal, no state there that one can follow, no subjectivity but only...subjects who destroy each other.... The Africans have not yet reached [a] recognition of the General.... What we name Religion, the State, that which exists in and for itself -- in other words, all that is valid -- all this is not yet at hand.... The Negro represents the Natural man in all his wildness: if we wish to grasp him, then we must drop all European conceptions. What we actually understand by "Africa" is that which is without history and resolution... [an Africa] on the threshold of world history.[10]

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[10] I rely on James Snead's direct translation from the German of extracts from Hegel's Die Vernunft in der Geschichte. See the former's "Repetition as a Trope in Black Culture," Black Literature and Literary Theory, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (New York and London: Methuen, 1984) 62-63. The English translation I have consulted is J. Sibree's G. W. F. Hegel, The Philosophy of History (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991), esp. 91-99 where

As spelt out here, Hegel's Africa is compelled, insofar as it is a product of the comparative racial-cultural geography and historiography of a reflexive European imagination, to appear in an exchange relation that confirms her in a marginal or peripheral status. According to Hegel, Africa's location in space and time is stagnantly below, or on the "threshold" of, what by comparison is a progressive and purposive European modernity. Modern European culture, unlike the "primitive" African, had "reached a recognition of [Self in] the General"; the "General" naming a state of being which is synonymous with what Hegel refers to as the world Staat. In the marginal exchange relation from within which the European projects her, Africa emerges then, precisely, as null and void; a continental non-entity.[11]

On the other hand, as articulated in the speculative Hegelian imaginary, Europe's being exhausts the world, since this being contains the world in and as its perfect self-expression. If so, in a dialectical fashion, Africa provides the perfect foil for Europe's will-to-worldliness: not only is Europe a power unto itself, this power-unto-Self expresses itself, in a salutary extension, as power-unto-the-Other. In the expression of this projective will, Europe's Everythingness (what Hegel calls the "General"), a capacious, worldly universality, is both opposed to and produced out of--hence subsumes into its

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Hegel's summary and dismissive references to "Africa proper" (i.e., black Africa) occur.

[11] Hegel's speculations depend on his being able to turn what he starts out with--a three-tiered, asymmetrical historiography, involving "Europe," "Asia" and "Africa proper"--into a neat binary opposition of the first two terms. The point is that if, in the rhetorical staging of the geographical tropes of The Philosophy of History, Hegel's Africa stands in a marginal exchange relation with Europe, as such appearing only to be quickly suppressed, the main exchange relation in what the philosopher capitalizes as History is that which pits West against East, Occidental Europe against Oriental(ized) Asia. Occidental supremacy over the Orient is confirmed, I would hazard, because Europe's symbolic Immensity first discovers its positive reflection in and against Africa's equally immense Nothingness. (For an incisive analysis of the content of the main exchange relation, see Edward Said's Orientalism New York: Vintage-Random House, 1979).

self-constitution--Africa's Nothingness, a lack of worldliness that confines the latter to a merely brutish immediacy. The enduring image of the "Dark Continent," pressed into service in late-nineteenth-century imperial ideology, preserves those singular processes of wholesale evacuation that made the continent into, and continues to reproduce it as, Europe's negative foil.[12]

And yet these observations are no sooner made than we must prepare ourselves to encounter a historical paradox. For the uncreated Africa of the European imagination; the continental space bereaved of its substantial human reality as it encountered the systems of the European Self; this given Africa becomes a palimpsest, so to speak, to be written over and through. Europe's mythology of Africa's radical ontological otherness gives the basis of a new creativity with an inward "African" orientation: the myth of Africa's lack of world-defining attributes provides the historicist and culturalist precondition for an endogenous narrativity with opposing truth claims to emerge.

The image of a palimpsest is an appropriate one for, as conceived and handed down by Hegel, Africa's Nothingness does not describe a contentless absolute. On the contrary, this Nothingness makes itself present in and as a content, a content which gives itself as such in that unique historical and existential relation that has been called the colonial encounter. It is this encounter that the critic Gayatri Spivak, writing about a post-imperial textuality, redefines as a relation of "worlding." Spivak adapts and extends the originally Heideggerian expression "worlding of a world"--and we may understand it here to mean stamping on an objectively given world "out there" a substantial reality

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[12] On "The Genealogy of the Myth of the 'Dark Continent,'" see Patrick Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1988) 173-197.

whose reference thenceforth is to a subjectively transforming "in here"--to capture the power relation that saw Europe writing her being over non-European peoples, the former assuming triumphally that the spaces of the latter "must be... uninscribed earth."[13]

Historically, then, we must see Europe's power to "world" the worlds encountered by her--if this "worlding" proceeds largely by negating these other worlds--as providing, with and after the encounter, a shared discursive space, a space of writing, whose reference is "the world" or, alternatively, "the universal." We might say that, by and through the textual-discursive activity of worlding, Europe pre-figures the extension of the rationale of human existence into a universalist narrative that accommodates (the) "world" and "worlding" as central mythoi.

For the Others on the margin of Europe, this extension could be read as the inauguration of a structure of desire: a desire to be or to become "worldly." To be, in this construction, was to be in the world; to become, to be for the world. Only in such relational terms can it be proposed validly that, after the encounter with Europe, Africa, whatever it was in and for itself, was Nothing--a presence which was absent--until it was produced in and for the world. The "absent-present" content of the colonial encounter, then, provides the semantic and structural precondition for the historic emergence of a general narrativity, a mythos which accommodates "Africa" to the "world"; a narrativity that adapts a continental idea, that is, to the structure of desire speculatively put into place by European worlding.

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[13] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," in "Race," Writing, and Difference ed. Henry Louis Gates (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1986) 279n.

The foregoing might be said to provide a "genealogy" of the "African writer," qua a modern writer, whose special circumstances as such provide the themes and issues discussed in Appiah's essay. When, as in the title of the essay, Appiah refers to "an African world" as a "myth," he is alluding therefore to a structure of speaking about, for, in the name and on behalf of, Africa, a structure whose genesis is to be found in the mythoi of the tradition represented by Hegel. Hence the genesis of a tradition of African writing is, in some fundamental sense, bound to--if by processes that invert, displace, revise and transform--the cognitive terms that give the Hegelian tradition its formal content. For Appiah, therefore, the claim laid by the African writer to the autonomy of his work in the name of a self-contained African world--as indeed he finds Soyinka doing in a voluntaristic reading of his own work--is a specious one.[14] The Yoruba and Nigerian writer cannot take what he calls "the African world"[15] merely for granted.

In a reading that maintains a rigorous fidelity to history, Appiah's corrective of Soyinka's willful misreading highlights what the latter would ignore: that the name "Africa" comes and enters into general acceptation with the imposition on the continent of the forms of worlding whose provenance is in European imperialism. Appiah's Africa is thus already inscribed in the discourses and culture shaped during the great age of European empire building around the world, an age whose legacies are still active in what is today's international global modernity.

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[14] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Myth of an African World," in In My Father's House (New York and Oxford: OUP, 1992) 73-84.

[15] As, for instance, appears in the title of Soyinka's seminal critical work on the foundations of African literature, Myth, Literature and the African World (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1976).

Hence since the African writer, as Appiah would have it, is a legatee of Empire, his Africa is obliged to be a name that participates at once in the questions and the possibilities, the liabilities and capacities, that come with and after the impact of Europe. As such it is a name that issues out of the imperial heritage in all its multifarious and contradictory poses. Thus for instance, on the one hand, the legacy of Empire includes what we recognize today as the "progressive" elements of modernity, such elements as, to take one example, the school that gave the writer his education. Yet, on the other hand, the selfsame modernist heritage of Empire also includes within its definition elements of a clearly retrograde nature. If, as is the case, these elements persist till this day in the forms of worlding carried over from Empire's repressive colonialist phase, it is these negative hangovers that allow us to speak of modernity in phases of colonialist and neo-colonialist expression (hence the expression colonialist modernity which recurs throughout this study).

Taken in the modality of being and coming after Europe, the tag "African" which accompanies the writer from the continent, Appiah implies, names a role in a post-imperial and post-colonial endeavour: the writer, qua African, is willy nilly enrolled in an ongoing "search for a culture." And this search is enjoined by her (for the African writer is a woman, too) complex heritage, one which if it inscribes the modern and the colonial problematically in each other, also conspires to inscribe both over the continent's pre-colonial cultures, cultures whose continuities are still very much in evidence. Here, then, is Appiah giving us a thick description of the socio-historical predicament of the writer:

> African writers...are [ethnically] Asante, Yoruba, Kikuyu, but what does this now mean? They are [nationally] Ghanaian, Nigerian, Kenyan, but does this yet mean anything? They are [racially] black, and what is the worth of the black person?.... This particular constellation of problems is not often found outside Africa: a recent colonial history, a multiplicity of diverse subnational indigenous traditions, a foreign language whose metropolitan culture has traditionally defined the "natives" by race as inferior...[16]

Out of this involved matrix, the African writer emerges in her here and now caught up in a late (quasi-)autobiographical quest for that which might constitute the foundation of "my people": she is looking for that element which, fully-realized as "African," will distinguish an existential constituency of "an African people" and validate her place within it.[17] Writes Appiah: "Though the European may feel the problem of who he or she is can be a private problem, the African asks always not 'who am I?' but 'who are we?' and my problem is not mine alone but 'ours.'"

Putting this in a slightly different register, we might say that the "Africa" Appiah's writer reaches for, in her here and now, is first a problematic pre-nominative--a before--whose negativity as such impels her on a quest for a positive attributive--an after --whose designation and destination is the "African."[18] The pre-nominative furnishes a pre-colonial content which hardly appears in a pure state since it has been overlaid, more or less, by the colonialist content of non-indigenous signifying systems (albeit, as in a

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[16] Appiah, In My Father's House 76.

[17] Cf. the Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Th'iongo, who, around 1973, observed that his writings to date constituted his "creative autobiography over the last twelve years," and that "My writing is really an attempt to understand myself, and my situation in society and in history." Cited by Rupert Schieder, "Black man's burden" Books in Canada (Oct. 1982): 15.

[18] Appiah quotes Achebe as saying: "the African identity is still in the making...I think it is part of the writer's role to encourage the creation of an African identity." See In My Father's House 74.

palimpsest, the earlier native content continues to show through these systems).[19] The difference or gap between pre-nominative and attributive, before and after--Soyinka refers poetically to this gap wherein the writer is compelled to make an original intervention as an "abyss of transition"--this is the difference between a given content and a style that has proved itself answerable to what it has been given. In effect this is a style that is or becomes "African" precisely because it has managed to rehabilitate the given and attributed to it a contemporary relevance.

And here, as formulated by Mikhail Bakhtin in his theories of the power and space-time relations that at once inhibit and enable the production and productivity of social language(s), we might construe the styles answerable to an African modernity as falling between the demands of "stylization" and "variation." These are two constitutive elements of the "mutual illumination" of languages or "dialogism" that Bakhtin finds constantly at work in the formation of human cultures. "Every authentic stylization," writes the great cultural theorist, "is an artistic representation...of another's language..." It is "only in a stylized language, one not his own, that the stylizer can speak about the subject [at hand] directly."[20] To the originally given language, though, the originating stylizer comes as a "free" agent, more or less:

> [The previously] stylized language is itself exhibited in the light of the language consciousness of a stylizer contemporary with it. Contemporaneous language casts a special light over the stylized language

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[19] Cf. Chinweizu who writes: "In every part of Africa, old institutions, value systems and political ideas, though submerged and damaged under the colonial dispensation, are still part of the contemporary realities." The West and the Rest of Us (New York: Random House, 1975) 187.

[20] Mikhail Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel," in The Dialogic Imagination (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 362.

> ...[it] creates a free image of another's language...by carrying into it its own interests...[21]

As presented by Bakhtin stylization becomes variation when "contemporaneous linguistic material...penetrate[s] a stylization." In that case what may be thought to be a "flaw in the stylization, its mistake..." is hardly so. For:

> Such inconsistency may...be deliberate and organized...In this case we no longer have stylization, but variation...Variation freely incorporates material from alien languages into contemporary topics, joins the stylized world with the world of contemporary consciousness, projects the stylized language into new scenarios, testing it in situations that would have been impossible for it on its own.[22]

With the insights furnished by Bakhtin before us, the long-running debate over whether or not the European-language (or Europhone) writing coming out of the continent could properly be labelled "African" may be referred for arbitration to and in that which the theorist of culture calls "authentic stylization." This debate, though many-sided, connotes one thing: the attributive search for that which might constitute "the African" is far from foreclosed by the European-language question. Indeed, insofar as it is going after le style modern Africain, this late search aims at creating a "free" African self-image out "of another's language." Coming belatedly, however, the would-be African searcher--Bakhtin's contemporaneous stylizer--is part of a complex post-imperial cross-cultural datum; and as such his search is obliged to rehearse and test its possibilities in "situations

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[21] Bakhtin, Dialogic Imagination 362-63.

[22] Bakhtin, Dialogic Imagination 363.

that would have been impossible for it on its own."[23]

The foregoing description of the location(s) of the African writer must, ultimately, rebound in its thickness on the frameworks of reading proposed for this study. It is pertinent to ask, then, what the relations are that obtain between Appiah's observations and the frameworks of class, nativity, nation and worlding that we have set up so far.

If the "African" is the attribution of a culturalist endeavour; if it is the nationalist search for a collective character (remember Appiah's writer asks not "who am I?" but "who are we?"), this quest for cultural-nationalist attribution is such that it is overdetermined by the considerations imposed by these frameworks. Hence, read in the overlapping categories of class, nativity, nation and the world, the questions the writer poses as he embarks on a search for his relation to the social world--what is ours? and who are we?--are resolved thickly into: "Out of the pressing demands imposed on me all at once by my (modernist) class perspective and native cultural heritage how can I work out the communal content of a "nation" that is or will be my original or authentic project(ion) in and for the world"?

Recast in this worldly mode the writer's search has to do not so much with a desideratum of cultural autonomy as it has to do with his location of and within a culture

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[23] Empire's institutions, including language, are invested with prestige and power, as the authors of The Empire Writes Back rightly argue. The post-imperial Europhone writer, confronted by the "impossibility" of his location within these power-laden forms, is obliged to wrest their power for his/her own ends. As s/he does so the writer is said to "appropriate" and "abrogate" the language of empire. See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back (London and New York: Routledge, 1989) 38-77. See also Bakhtin, Dialogic Imagination 292-93. For African inflections of the post-imperial problematic of language, see Kwaku Larbi Korang and Stephen Slemon, "Post-Colonialism and Language," in Writing and Africa, eds., Mpalive-Hangson Msiska and Paul Hyland (London: Longman, forthcoming).

that authenticates itself because it is auto-effective.[24] His original problem, therefore, is how and in what forms the first two givens--class and nativity--as beginning, and the fourth--the world--as both given and goal, might converge on the thinking and meaningful promulgation of the third: a nationally-defined culture that is authentic for being self-serving. If so it is this third term, "nation," that imposes itself as the burden of originality on the writer, interposing itself in his here and now as a middle passage--abyss of transition, as Soyinka will have it--wherein a reconciliation of some kind might be negotiated between the first two and the fourth terms. I seize this figural passage between--itself a recurrent topos in much African writing--as the middle that names the situation of the writer and provides the ontological configuration of his class location.

We will see shortly below, going back to the work of Sarbah that, as the archetypal African writer sets down his deepest intuitions about the horizon of limits and possibilities prescribed by his ontological situation, he also obliges us with descriptive and prescriptive modules for conceptualizing what it is that makes an African middle class. In Fanti National Constitution we discover that not only does the pioneer nationalist describe the present "spatial" location of this--his--class but he ascribes to it a "temporal" role also, the latter expressed in characterological terms that make a living (native) past and an anticipated (modern) future converge on nation as a moral imperative

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[24] By auto-effective culture I mean to imply a culture that, materially and in the mechanisms of its "internal" psychology, would feel itself to have so managed its liabilities (i.e., that which it is obliged to borrow from others) as to have transformed them into a relative optimization or enhancement of its own possibilities: a culture that thereby has maximized its life chances. For an illustration of this sense of auto-effectivity, see Achebe's "envious" references to its achievement, as he leads us to suppose, by contemporary Japanese culture. See Chinua Achebe, "What Has Literature Got to Do with It?," Hopes and Impediments (New York: Anchor-Doubleday, 1989) 154-170.

of present action.

As with the contemporary writer, so it was with the turn of the century literati of African nationalism. It goes without saying, then, that what has been outlined above as the questions perennially confronting the African writer are the very ones which, in one version or the other, early nationalism was obliged inaugurally to pose of its own activity. The early writerly efforts to resolve these questions are thus best read as gestures in anticipatory solidarity with the struggles in contemporary times of the comparatively new writers who self-consciously assert the name "African" to describe themselves and their activity.

It is in this regard that the latter's situation, so perspicaciously laid out by Appiah, requires to be read through the former's efforts in order to establish the light they mutually cast on each other as expressions of a continuous tradition. Doing so we will be enabled to see a tradition whose questions and partial answers are inscribed at large in the problematic (unfolding) of African modernity, a problematic whose complexity Appiah describes in the citation that appears above. If, as he concludes, "it is because [Soyinka and other continental writers] share this problematic that it makes sense to speak of a Nigerian writer as an African writer, with the problems of an African writer,"[25] we need also to add that the pedigree of productive self-interrogation that has ensured a modern African "literary culture," a culture "still in the making,"[26] goes back a long time. At least a century of a concerted effort to shape a pan-African (literary) culture will

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[25] Appiah, In My Father's House 77.

[26] Appiah, In My Father's House 76.

have elapsed before Soyinka, the future Nobel laureate, began his outstanding creative contributions to reshape the speculative and imaginative geography of the continent. And he will, when it came to his turn, do so in a salutary African self-image deliberately calculated to contradict the one given in the mythos of imperial European worlding.

As for the procedures and protocols of imperial worlding--and we have seen something of this in Hegel's powerful discursive articulation--they had ensured that if being in the world was being a power unto Oneself, being for the world was to command the respect of (worldly) Others as such. To be worldly enjoined one thus to demonstrate that one's nation, the basic element defining the modern self,[27] was empowered to be itself most in bearing in itself a recognition of the universal. In the next chapter we will see how a formal proposition like this one--bearing oneself into a reflexive recognition of and by the universal--buttresses the rhetoric of political demand employed by Attoh Ahuma in his writings on behalf of a Gold Coast nation.

What appears as a fully realized argument in Attoh Ahuma's The Gold Coast Nation, though, may be traced out in Sarbah's earlier Fanti National Constitution as a theme whose articulation appears as an admitted difficulty for the latter nationalist. Writes Sarbah in the sixth chapter of his Fanti National Constitution: "Placed as he is between the white man on the one side and his untutored brethren on the other side, the educated African has special difficulties to contend with." Whatever difficulty he has in articulating the content of the problem, though, Sarbah clearly marks the formal

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[27] Cf. Anderson who observes: "Indeed, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time." See Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 12.

predicament of the educated African: it emanates from his location in a middle position. The early nationalist speaks from within this middle location and ontologically defines himself as part of a class of Africans caught between the symbol laying claim to a worldly universality--the "white man"--and that correspondingly devalued by this claim: his "untutored brethren."[28] If, being untutored, these native brethren did not share in the advantages of the educated African, the major moral shortcoming of the latter to date had been a failure of responsibility. The educated African has not laid "stress on the necessity of levelling-up of the masses."[29]

What content might we give the difficulty that afflicts Sarbah? In the first place, he shows a clear awareness of the fact that, inside his own nativity, his English education, an exogenous factor, by making him a possessor, so to speak, of the world, had conferred advantages and privileges upon him that raised him above the masses. As an educated African, and one who wrote at that, he was, in effect, voiced in a native African setting by the heritage of an imperial modernity. As part of its worldly force, this exogenous heritage had brought with itself the written word, a force whose projection Sarbah's works, qua written works, participated in and whose prestige they demonstrated (and still demonstrate). In themselves, then, these written works betokened

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[28] Sarbah, Fanti National Constitution 250. Cf. these lines written by the most famous African of his day, the Gold Coast (inter)nationalist J. E. K. Aggrey, to his (Negro-American) wife as he set out from America to Africa in 1920 to work for the Phelps-Stokes Commission on Education: "[M]y mission is to stand between the Natives of Africa and the Whites of the world--what a responsibility! I am to interpret the soul, the longings, the wishes, the desires and possibilities of the Negroes to the White Governments...I go forth...to serve my God...Who has...asked me to go lead my people away from the Egypt of ignorance and maltreatment." Cited by Edwin Smith, Aggrey of Africa (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1930) 147-48. Emphasis mine.

[29] Sarbah, Fanti National Constitution 250.

a superior rationalizing power supervening over, and working visible and not so readily visible changes on, the domestic space of native orality.

For historical reasons, though, Sarbah's voice--understood here as a function of the prestige attached to the power of the written word--had to carry a peculiar inflection. Ten years after his birth, in 1874, the British Protectorate of the Gold Coast had become a formal colony by the former's unilateral declaration.[30] Nor, as the century rolled to a close, would this circumstance be an isolated one: colonial Gold Coast was merely one early instance in an emergent pattern. All over Africa, European imperialisms were intensifying the exercise of arbitrary power over the sometime sovereign native polities of the continent.

As a young man of twenty, Sarbah, the beneficiary of a European education, would be among the millions of helpless Africans who, without being consulted in any way, would have their territories parcelled out by and to the imperial powers of Europe at the Berlin Conference of 1884. If this Conference had given dubious legal sanction to the "Scramble for Africa," the radical zoning and restructuring of the continent it subsequently enforced meant that in the political economy of the "new imperialism"--as it came to be referred to--a voice like Sarbah's was constrained to come from the colonial periphery[31] of an imperial modernity. The metaphor of a "rising generation," the self-

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[30] See Appendix D of Casely Hayford's Gold Coast Native Institutions (London: Frank Cass, 1970) 369-380, for a reproduction of the British charter of July 24, 1874, "constituting...a separate colony to be called the Gold Coast Colony."

[31] For a theoretical elaboration of the concept of a periphery --presented in a historical survey of the relationship between the political economies of African societies and European imperialism--see Samir Amin, "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa--Origins and Contemporary Forms" The Journal of Modern African Studies 10.4 (1972): 503-24. The merit of Amin's study is that it does not insist on a narrowly economistic analysis but relates changes in "pure" economic phenomena to alterations of the economy of cultural relations as

image of educated West Africans at the turn of the century, gives ample indication that a voice like Sarbah's would see itself "rising" against the backdrop of that which constituted and enforced its peripheral status.

The fact then of Sarbah's living under an oppressive colonialist order, an order brought into being by the very modernist imperial heritage to which he laid claim as an educated African, was one calculated to make him all too aware that his voice--that is to say, what power he had--was willy nilly emptied of any auto-effective reality. Because its real modality gave itself as a peripheral one, Sarbah's middle class voice, we might say, was a voice colonially thwarted in the completion.

For this reason the difficulty which Sarbah's writing begins to negotiate is how, from the "incomplete" location, colonially enforced, of the educated African--representing the class of Africans constrained, in the marginal exchange relation involving Europe and Africa, to fall between the "white man" and the "masses" of the native people--how this class might guarantee itself a full voice by "restoring" a nativity, whose predicament it shared, to a full human reality. Accompanied by a keen sense of the constraints, a quest for completion, in effect, was on in the middle, its goal the restitution of nativity to a self-effecting cultural and political reality in an ideal of modern nationhood. This is what Sarbah, in a Shakespearean moment, translates into a hortatory rhetoric of middle class responsibility. "'Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie, which we ascribe to heaven,'" he writes, and then proceeds to give us a laborious image of an African middle class which, bearing a nativity of yore with itself, must pursue an onward

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much within African societies as between these societies and the external forces impinging upon them.

course towards a worldly destiny:

> The educated African is at present like a pioneer in a forest primeval. Whatever visions he may have about the fair city that is to be, his present task is to cut down the trees, root up the stumps, clear the ground, and prepare the site for the city of tomorrow.[32]

What Sarbah's "city of tomorrow" might be, as I round off this brief discussion of his work, is a projection linked with an outstanding question we have identified earlier. And the question is this: if the fact of his being an educated native was not in doubt, what made the pioneer nationalist an educated African, as he chose to describe himself?

The overdetermined trajectory that Sarbah's and other nationalist works had to pass through, a trajectory in which class and nativity moved towards the world in nation, permits us to see the "African" taking on two overlapping attributes. Ex hypothesi we might say that the peripherally incomplete class comprised of the educated native is and becomes attributively African in the works of early nationalism insofar as this class is at once reinvented--through activist and advocative writing among other things--as a "purely" political class-for-power and, in a "mixed" mode, as a culturalist (i. e. cultural-political) class-for-the-world. These attributes require to be seen as two sides of the same coin, with the "African" participating in them as the middle class sign par exellence of

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[32] Sarbah, Fanti National Constitution 246. I see Soyinka reiterating Sarbah's activist metaphor seventy years later--in language almost redolent of Sarbah's--in a reading of the Yoruba god-figure Ogun. In the Yoruba pantheon, Soyinka informs us, Ogun "correlates...with the fourth area of existence...labelled the abyss of transition." Just as Sarbah sets up the archetypal role of the educated African as that of a pioneer who must nurture the will to clear the forest primeval, so does Soyinka mediate his writerly role in the abyss of a transitional African modernity by way of the myth-allegory of the exemplary, pioneer activism of Ogun. Writes Soyinka: "Ogun is the embodiment of challenge, the Promethean instinct in man, constantly at the service of society for its full self-realization. Hence his role of explorer through primordial chaos..." Soyinka's retrieval of Ogun as Muse of a (tragic) metaphysics of Will makes the god-figure into a relevant metaphor for the challenge of African modernity; and he does it as part of a "secular" project that "combines the re-creation of a pre-colonial African world-view with eliciting its transposable elements into modern potential." See pp. 26, 30, 115 of Myth, Literature and the African World. Emphasis mine.

a mode of worldly consummation. The "African" is to be understood then as the universalist adaptation wherein a less than sovereign class imagines itself, in sovereign nationhood, acceding to its own sovereign completeness. This last point I will amplify in Chapter 4, in relation to Hayford's "Ethiopianist" pan-Africanism as it appears in Ethiopia Unbound. Even as we situate the "African" in a class rubric in its broadest conception, we may not overlook the point carried by the ethnic marker "Fanti" in the titles of Sarbah's works. The badge of ethnicity displayed by this "educated African" would suggest that, for him, the "African" began where he was: in and as home work, so to speak. The "African" as such appears implicitly as a comparative postulate of worlding in his writings. In this early nationalist's pragmatic empiricism "Africa" was given as, and hence was to be remoulded in, that which his existence could really encompass: the order of the Fanti-Akan world he had grown up in.

On the other hand, in the work of Sarbah's contemporary Casely Hayford we will see a nationalist who sought nothing less than to weave a consummate "Ethiopian" metaphysics out of the same founding Fanti-Akan datum. But then if Hayford appears to have taken a singular African world more or less for granted this was because his strivings, following Blyden's, were famously pan-Africanist and hence could not afford to compromise on a rigorous metaphysical and ideological principle of unity. Hayfordian unanimism, as we shall see, will secure its intellectual foundation in a radical nativism: in an age when nationalist ideology was giving the idea of sankofa radical sanction, Hayford's conservative nativism will surpass in intensity any mustered by fellow

nationalists of his generation.[33]

Nativism, as adumbrated in various versions by the Gold Coast cultural nationalist, prepares the culturalist foundation for "Ghana" to emerge as a pragmatic possibility. If a glimmer of that possibility is first to be found in the 1860s, in the writings of Africanus Horton, subsequently the most passionately argued claims for a Gold Coast nation, picking up from where Horton left off, will be Attoh Ahuma's as set out especially in The Gold Coast Nation. In this work, we will find an Attoh Ahuma whose insights partake of Sarbah's pragmatism. Yet if this makes his nationalist conclusions modest compared with the grand system-building of Hayford in Ethiopia Unbound, unlike Sarbah's relatively "ethnocentric" outlook, Attoh Ahuma's allegiance to nation-ness will be consistently expressed in trans-ethnic terms giving coverage to virtually all the territory encompassed by British colonial jurisdiction in the Gold Coast. While differences between the three nationalists should not be overemphasized to the point of obscuring their fundamental unity of purpose, it is probably correct to place Attoh Ahuma's work between Sarbah's and Casely Hayford's. If this work hooks into Sarbah's pragmatism by beginning where he is, the Gold Coast, Attoh Ahuma's dogged insistence that the fragmented polities of the Colony may yet be constituted into one

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[33] Sankofa is an Akan expression literally meaning "to return to retrieve." The Gold Coast Independent of 2 Dec. 1915 reported the formation by Casely Hayford of the Gold Coast National Research Association whose object was to eliminate the "white man's standpoint from the black man's outlook"; to restore "national respect and self-confidence" by adhering strictly to native customs unadulterated by European elements; and finally to reconstruct "on paper" the native State "before the disintegrating foreign element intruded, or insinuated itself, into it." See Kimble, Political History 525. Another radical Gold Coast nativist was Kobina Sekyi. A contemporary of Hayford's and one of the pillars of the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, this lawyer wrote West Africa's first dramatic comedy of manners, The Blinkards, in 1915. Performed in the Cape Coast of the playwright's day to advocate the conservative cause of nativism, this partisan play directs a stinging satire against the artificial manners of the mimic men and women, the Afro-Europeans, of Fantiland. The Blinkards is reissued by Heinemann (London, 1974).

nation approaches the grand, synthetic spirit of Hayford. In his vehemently argued defense of the Gold Coast nation we will see a nationalist who, while giving renewed political and moral articulation to the twin problematic of a Gold Coast class-for-power and class-for-the-world, was also making room for "Ghana," beyond the strictly ethnic Fanti and below the effusively racialist pan-African (or "Ethiopian"), to appear. Attoh Ahuma's extraordinarily argued lead essay in The Gold Coast Nation--this essay gives the work its title--provides a large part of the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2

THE ROAD TO GHANA

> When did we become 'a people'? When did we stop being one? Or are we in the process of becoming one? What do these big questions have to do with our intimate relationships with each other and with others?
>
> --Edward Said, After the Last Sky

I. Horton and After: The "Gold Coast Nation" in Attoh Ahuma's Pragmatic Rhetoric of Political Demand

> Even the Awoonahs who have been our enemies for the past twenty years have now joined us and have agreed willingly and joyfully to join the deputation movement.[34]
>
> --Tackie, King of Accra, to Kwame Fori, King of Akwapim, 1886.

The epigraph is taken from the context of inter-ethnic diplomacy in colonial Gold Coast at the turn of the century. The letter of the ethnic Ga, King Tackie of Accra, to the ethnic Akan, King Kwame Fori of Akwapim, in which the former urges the worthy example of the ethnic Anlo-Ewe on his addressee, is produced here as an instance of the anti-colonial solidarities which, mobilized at the time, were making for the incipient

[34] The first (unsuccessful) deputation scheme, mooted in the period between 1885-87, united eastern and western Gold Coast in a common demand for representative institutions in the Colony. King Tackie's letter is cited by Francis Agbodeka, African Politics and British Policy in the Gold Coast (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1971) 126.

"nationalization" of the Colony. Part of the several notable activist efforts in the Gold Coast advancing the cause of trans-ethnic solidarity at the turn of the century, King Tackie's letter is issued in the context of widespread native protests against the heavy-handed usurpation by the British Crown of the sovereign rights constituting the legitimate basis of the indigenous polities of the country.

The King of Accra would likely not have seen the conclusions contained in a memo written by one Sir Edward Cust in 1839. Nevertheless it is a memo worth recalling since the goals that Tackie and others in the 1886-87 Gold Coast Deputation Movement stood for were directly opposed to its conclusions. Titled "Reflections on West African Affairs," and addressed to the Colonial Office, Cust's piece foretells the shape and direction British policy on the Gold Coast would take, especially in the last few years leading up to and those following the promulgation of the Colony in 1874. Wrote Cust then:

> It is out of season at this time of the day, to question the original policy of conferring on every colony of the British Empire a mimic representation of the British constitution. But if the creature so endowed has sometimes forgotten its real insignificance and under the fancied importance of speakers and maces and all...has dared to defy the mother country, she has to thank herself for the folly of conferring such privileges on a condition of society that has no earthly claim to so exalted a position.

For the apologist of Empire, therefore, the conclusion was a very obvious one:

> A fundamental principle appears to have been forgotten or overlooked in our system of colonial policy--that of colonial dependence. To give to a colony the forms of independence is a mockery; she would not be a colony for a single hour if she could maintain an independent station.[35]

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[35] For this citation I am indebted to Homi K. Bhabha who uses it as an epigraph to his "Of Mimicry and Man: the Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" October 28 (1984): 125.

Cust's argument for Empire, as it stands, founds its defence implicitly in natural law and its corollary natural right. However, as he deploys them, the authority of these founding notions are made to undergo subtle shifts so that the imperial enterprise, otherwise an indefensible principle of violent power, discovers its indemnity in the Hegelian General (i. e. the "universal"). Cust's language so manages the latter that Empire ends up bearing the prestigious stature of being a priori: doing partisan ideological work with a submerged but active language of natural law, the colonial apologist in effect arrogates to the British Empire the aprioristic expression of a worldly universality. And if Empire's rationality as such is given self-evidential embodiment in British political institutions, that only goes to confirm the premier, "exalted" stature of Britain in an "earthly" hierarchy.

It is from these founding premises that Cust argues further that those who had not attained to a recognition of Self in the General had no natural right, most certainly no natural right of and to sovereign nationhood. British right, vested in the sovereignty of her nationhood, was founded in institutions whose rationality, having developed to the point of such self-recognition, authenticated themselves as the natural--i.e., a priori--expression of the world Staat. Occupying this status conferred on Britain the right, the a priori guarantee that is, to extend her sovereignty naturally into a coverage of others. As for these others, who indeed required to be subordinated, as Cust concludes, an "independent station" was a most unnatural right. And, since a self-determining power was a "mockery" for them, a parody of the authentic thing, any haste to grant subordinate colonials such status had surely to offend nature itself.

If Cust supplies a defensive thesis to cover the offensive nationalism of Empire,

it goes without saying that the political-intellectual road to "Ghana" begins in the encounter between colonialist apologetics like his and the pragmatic spirit of the colonized native, that spirit exhibited in King Tackie's urgent letter. In the wake of such anti-colonialist pragmatism in the Gold Coast, not only would the idea of nation be wrested from arguments like the one above in spirited refutations and challenges, nation would also begin to take shape from transformations of the very transformations authorizing these colonialist apologia. In this latter mode, the African counter-arguments, when they began, would be based, as Benedict Anderson remarks in his classic study of nationalism, on the "inner incompatibility of nation and empire."[36] For if the pre-imperial sovereignty of the Anglo-British nation itself had the a priori guarantee of natural law, and if natural right is referrable to natural law, then Empire was clearly a principle of power, not nature. Empire, as such, had no natural right and was not defensible as having such right.

It is in this mode that we find Blyden, not long after Cust's reminder, stating uncompromisingly:

> An African nationality is the great desire of my soul. I believe nationality to be an ordinance of nature; no people can rise to an influential position among the nations without a distinct and efficient nationality. Cosmopolitanism has never effected anything, and never will, perhaps till the millennium...[37]

We might suppose Blyden to be asserting here that natural law (the "ordinance of nature") imposed a moral equivalence on all human beings without distinction; but then

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[36] Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 88-89.

[37] E. W. Blyden in Liberia's Offering (New York, 1862). Cited by E. U. Essien-Udom in his Introduction to Casely Hayford's The Truth About the West African Land Question (London: Frank Cass, 1971) x. Emphasis mine.

that, in its universal reference and applicability, this same moral law enshrined itself in, and left all equally deserving of, the particular distinction of nationality. Hence if natural law imposed natural right equally, it did so as such on different sovereignties. Deservingly different and equally deserving: Blyden having hammered home this point, this will be the essence of the argument substantially advanced by Attoh Ahuma in his claims on behalf of a Gold Coast nationality.[38] Attoh Ahuma's argument appears shortly below, but before we get to it let me present in a brief sketch the historical context and political background of its articulation.

Once stripped of its accretions of naturalism, what Cust, the able defender of colonial imperialism, was insisting on is simply the long-lived cliche that "might is right." In his nation's relations with the others it had confined to subordinate colonial status, it was power, not natural law, that spelled the limit of political rationality.[39] And as for this "natural" imperial principle, the opportunities for its clear demonstration would come in the years after 1844, in the context of changing relations between Britain and the native polities of the Gold Coast.

The constitutional history of the entity that would become Ghana in 1957 began, it is commonly agreed, with the ratification of the Bond of 1844, a treaty between

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[38] Cf. also Casely Hayford's equation of the nationalist demand for "free institutions" with the "law of Nature" in The Land Question 112.

[39] Cf. the ff.: From the earliest recorded times might has always constituted right, or been held to do so...By this kind of right, that is, power or might, we seized on North America, dispossessing the native races, to whom America naturally belonged; we drove them back into their primitive forests, slaughtering them piteously...The same tragedy was repeated in South America; the mingled host of Celtiberian adventurers brought against the feeble Mexican, Peruvian, and Brazilian, the strength of a fair or, at least, of a fairer race. Robert Knox, The Races of Man: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Influence of Race over the Destinies of Nations (1850; 1862). Cited in Philip D. Curtin, ed. Imperialism (New York: Walker and Company, 1971) 12-13.

representatives of the British Crown and traditional rulers representing the loose agglomeration of chiefdoms comprising the region of the Gold Coast known as Fantiland. At the basis of the agreement by the Fanti chiefs to transfer rights of suzerainty to the Crown, with regard to the exercise of certain specific functions, lay the fact that, for quite a period of time, British mercantile interests had enjoyed and exercised considerable prestige in this part of the Gold Coast. Negotiating the transfer meant that, in exchange for the Crown's protection, the chiefs were committing themselves to a fairly radical "modernization" of native institutions: in the wording of the Bond they were accepting the principle of "moulding the customs of the country to the general principle of British law."[40]

The late 1860s would see the Sierra Leonean medical doctor Africanus Horton concluding in his two major works that native commitment to institutional reform in the Protectorate of the Gold Coast pointed in the salutary direction of African self-determination. Horton, writing as an advocate for the modernization[41] of the "political condition of the Gold Coast," would suggest in his works that if certain changes of a politico-legal nature were to be introduced and suitable adaptations implemented here and there, the country he had worked in and observed firsthand could become two modern

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[40] See Appendix D: "Bond, 6th March, 1844," in Casely Hayford, Gold Coast Native Institutions (London: Frank Cass, 1970) 367.

[41] I use "modernization" here to capture a rationale of self-derivative exchange, involving indigenous and alien European forms, implied by Horton's writings. Hortonian wisdom foresees such exchange, conducted in terms of the principles he sets forth, substituting between these forms in such a manner as would, despite distinctions in territory and modes of cultural expression, "raise the [severally divided] African to a people."

self-governing entities.[42] Horton would not have felt that his unofficial recommendations were unique; indeed he makes them as an adjunct to an 1865 resolution by the Select Committee of the [British] House of Commons that seemed to endorse a policy of gradually transferring institutional power to Africans in British settlements on the Gold Coast and elsewhere.[43]

Nevertheless, appearing between 1868 and 1870, in tandem with the proto-nationalist agitation that was then shaking the country,[44] Horton's proposals sounded urgently against a backdrop of official paternalism and insouciance, increasingly on display in the arbitrary exercise of British power over the very Gold Coast polities the Crown had contracted to protect. And, if anything, the arbitrariness of British power was being helped along, as Horton saw, by petty rivalries between these already relatively disadvantaged native polities. For Horton, then, only a will towards nation-statehood by these rivalrous polities, by which he meant a disciplined delegation or cession of power by them to a central representative body, could have hoped to secure them an equitable

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[42] Horton proposes a republican eastern Gold Coast and a western counterpart, the Fanti Confederation, with a constitutional monarchy. His reflections and recommendations appear in West African Countries and Peoples (London, 1868) and Letters on the Political Condition of the Gold Coast (London, 1870).

[43] "[T]he object of our policy," the Committee recommended, "should be to encourage in the natives the exercise of those qualities which may render it possible for us more and more to transfer to them the administration of all the Governments, with a view to our ultimate withdrawal from all..." See Henry S. Wilson, Origins of West African Nationalism (London: Macmillan, 1969) 151. Kimble cites a Lord Grey who, in 1853, had observed of British political relations with the Gold Coast: "The true policy I believe to be...the formation of a regular government on the European model...so that interference and the assistance of the British authorities may be less and less required." See David Kimble, A Political History of Ghana (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963) 550.

[44] The first nationalist movements in West Africa were the Fanti Confederation and its imitator, the Accra Native Confederation. Both flourished in the 1870s and, declining, gave way to the Gold Coast Aborigine Rights' Protection Society in 1897. The influence of Horton--he would, in an era of intense optimism before the promulgation of the colony (1874), make an unsuccessful bid for the governorship of the Gold Coast--was writ large over the constitution drawn up by the Fanti Confederation.

deal against the otherwise gratuitous impositions of British imperial might.

The optimist who was thinking and writing these things in 1868 and 1870 could not have foreseen that the political homogenization he wished and worked for would come from a colonialist, rather than a national-sovereigntist, direction. Six years after Horton first ventured his policy recommendations towards a self-determining Gold Coast, the country would lapse from the status of a Protectorate to a full-blown British colonial Dependency. It would be left to Attoh Ahuma, accusing the Crown of a breach of faith and trust, to give a vigorous statement of what Horton would have felt, following the disappointing conduct of Britain, to be the height of imperial chicanery. Thus Attoh Ahuma in his "Colony or Protectorate" (1897):

> Our rulers are our friends and nothing more--valuable acquisitions, friends in need and in deed, true friends, good friends...; and being friends, and nothing but friends, to seek insidiously to enslave us, to brand us with the hallmark of conquered subjects, is to outrage good faith and commit a breach of confidence.

If "Punic faith is impossible to the genius of the British Constitution," as Attoh Ahuma reminds his interlocutors further, then colonial imposition was a confidence trick, an artifice that went against the principles of natural right and justice enshrined in a constitution from which the people of the Gold Coast were deriving "our budding ideas of British jurisprudence...fraught with peace, fair play, and justice--especially justice."[45]

It is with "justice" on his side therefore that, in "The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness," Attoh Ahuma will proclaim the natural and other rights of his

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[45] Rev. S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, "Colony or Protectorate?: Thoughts on the Present Discontent." Addressed to the Gold Coast Aborigines' Rights Protection Society, Cape Coast Castle. The Gold Coast Methodist Times April 30, 1897. Rpt. as Appendix B in Casely Hayford, Native Institutions 316.

"people," rights that the British presence, by ungenerous colonial default, had shown could only, as it were, repose constitutionally in the idea of nation-ness. If it is nation that frames the contest, then Attoh Ahuma opens his argument by directing a salvo at and against the "rash and irresponsible literalists" who would deny the nation-ness of the Gold Coast as a tactic to sanction her continued oppression under the colonial yoke. These are the ones asserting "strenuously" that:

> [T]he Gold Coast, with its multiform composition of congeries of States of Provinces, independent of each other, divided by complex laws and customs, and speaking a great variety of languages--could not be said to be a nation in the eminent sense of the word. The term, it is urged, presupposes in its connotation, the existence of a homogeneous community included in or bounded by one vast Realm, governed and controlled by one potent sovereign, and possessed of one constitution, one common tongue.[46]

The argument for nation as a seamlessly homogeneous constituency, though, is one that appears to Attoh Ahuma to be "purely academic"; making a case against the Gold Coast this way was certainly to pay insufficient regard to the "practical considerations" that attended her unique, pluralistic situation.

Yet if homogeneity as a datum of nation-ness must be insisted on, then, presenting what amounts to his tongue in his cheek to the proponents of this view, the defender of Gold Coast nationality advances a gallantly paradoxical line of reasoning that is also consistently rational in its own terms. In a counter-argument which at once rhetorically concedes his opponents' point, to his nationalist advantage, and withholds it from them, to his anti-colonialist advantage, Attoh Ahuma points out that the longevity of colonial

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[46] Rev. S. R. B. Atto Ahuma, The Gold Coast Nation and National Consciousness (London: Frank Cass, 1971) 1.

duration alone has imposed and imposes, as if from above, the nation-making prerequisite of homogeneity on the Gold Coast's multiform domesticity. "For more than sixty years," he writes:

> there has been established within our territories an imperium in imperio--the highest organized form of government in creation, which binds us an integral part of an empire over which the sun never sets. We are being welded together under one umbrageous Flag--a Flag that is the symbol of justice, freedom, and fairplay.

Hence he concludes: "The Gold Coast under the aegis of the Union Jack is the unanswerable argument to all who may incontinently withhold from us the common rights, privileges, and status of nationality" (GCN, 2).[47]

What Attoh Ahuma appears to be saying in the passage is that both through and in spite of the colonial presence "we are a nation." He is affirming in other words that, in themselves, the acts by which colonial power imposed homogeneity on the Gold Coast did not make her a nation so much as that the essence of the Colony's nation-ness was being revealed through and in spite of these acts. As a contingent fact, that is, colonial duration did not and could not encompass Gold Coast nation-ness. Hence it is that in response to those "wiseacres who would fain deny us, as a people, the inalienable heritage of nationality," Attoh Ahuma "dare[s] [to] affirm, with sanctity of reason and the emphasis of conviction that, WE ARE A NATION" (GCN, 1).

From here Attoh Ahuma's nationalist counter-argument on behalf of the prerequisite of homogeneity, it would seem, is compelled to rely on an understated metaphor of natural osmosis to carry its paradoxical point. If he saw homogeneity imposing itself

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[47] The duration of sixty years, of course, begins with the signing of the Bond of 1844.

on the Gold Coast from "above," it came not so much from the will of a colonial imperialism as it came from somewhere beyond this will. On a positive side, the colonial will carried as a latency within itself certain "God-given"--that is to say, transcendent, aprioristically guaranteed--rights, truths and values felt to be co-extensive with the idea and status of nationhood. Hence the sixty or so years of living in a "contiguous" mode with what the Union Jack really represented--the political and value-ideals enshrined in the language of post-Enlightenment civility--already conferred on the Gold Coast, by "natural," if also willed, osmotic transfer, the status of a nation.

Against a reductive literalism, therefore, Attoh Ahuma takes a position--and Horton would have endorsed its practicality--that argues that a nation is not an inert fact of being so much as it is a matter of the willed actualization of a human latency. Nation being a matter of will, then, according to the nationalist, since "any series of States in the same locality, however extensive, may at any time be merged into a nation," it is only reasonable to suppose that, "If we were not [a nation], it was time to invent one" (GCN, 1).

All nations, Attoh Ahuma appears to be arguing, are (f)acts of symbolic constitution. Nation is the incarnate expression of a pre-constitutive and pro-creative Idea, Spirit, or Will. For this reason, even though the nationalist's "nation," the Gold Coast, smarting under the colonial yoke, "may be 'a miserable, mangled, tortured, twisted tertium quid,' or...a Nation 'scattered and peeled...a Nation meted out and trodden down,'" it nevertheless was "still a Nation." For his emphatic assertion is that the pro-creative Geist of nation-ness is abundantly manifest in the Gold Coast. Attoh

Ahuma's name for it is the past: not only do "we have a nation," as he argues, but "what is more, we have a Past--'though ungraced in story'" (GCN, 1). To the explicit demand to invent a political nation, therefore, the nationalist adds the equally explicit demand to invent a foundational culturalist national allegory, a narrative whose "story" will express the unfolding of an immemorial Volkgeist.

In what location does Attoh Ahuma find the potential for the Geist of the Gold Coast nation to reach its most developed form? Where find the perfect vehicle for that spirit which, moving towards self-consciousness, wills the invention of a transcendent community--"a people"--beyond the Gold Coast's otherwise merely "multiform... congeries of states independent of each other"? In what socio-historical matrix, that is, does it appear as an imperative to subsume the fragments and the differences comprising the colony in a higher rationality: that of modern nation-statehood?

The answers lie in the situation of a rising generation increasingly left with the feeling that it had been thwarted in the rising by the advent of British colonial policy. For all the class prestige it still enjoyed relative to the "masses," this was a generation that had been shunted aside, pushed into a peripheral and inconsequential role in the affairs of a Gold Coast lately "homogenized," for better or for worse, into one polity by colonial power. It is this predicament, the colonial alienation of power from a native middle class, that is referred to in 1909 by British administrator Sir John Roger when he points out the contradiction inherent in the official policy of turning out "black and brown Englishmen" by the score and then "cursing the finished article when the

operation is complete."[48]

The language of psychoanalysis teaches that it is lack that hollows the human and social being into desire. Such a description, it must be understood, captures the relational nature of lack and desire: one can only desire that which one can visualize but which an obstacle perforce deprives one of. In this sense then the account Sir Roger gives shows us a colonial relation that had "hollowed" power out of the very being of a native middle class.[49] It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that if the class being had been emptied into desire, its desire thenceforth was for power. Hence, in the facts of the immediate colonial relation, we see a launching of a peripheral middle class into a consciousness of itself as a class-for-power.

Then, again, a Gold Coast class-for-power, as we will see shortly, would also be aware that the protocols of European imperial worlding have included the invention of substantial cultural pasts, speculative (hi)stories or allegories of a group Geist unfolding towards its worldly consummation. The competitive value of such inventions would have been evident to Attoh Ahuma and others in the successful blacking out of Africa achieved by the consummate European Weltgeist; an Africa thenceforth induced to appear, as suggested earlier, only as Europe's negative foil. Thus the Gold Coast nationalist's

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[48] See G. I. C. Eluwa, "The National Congress of British West Africa: A Pioneer Nationalist Movement" Pan-African Journal 4.2 (Spring 1971): 147. Sir John Roger's comments appear in The African Mail of 9th July, 1909.

[49] Turn of the century colonial administrators jealously guarded their power and lived in fear of the rivalry of the educated native. Examples abound of white administrators excoriating and calumniating educated Africans. The latter were "the curse of the West Coast," and were represented if not as incompetent halfwits, then as a trouble-making halfbreeds. See Agbodeka, African Politics 21-23; Kimble, A Political History 91, etc. Casely Hayford will argue in his Ethiopia Unbound, for instance, that but for the insidious separatist and other policies adopted by colonial power to limit black competition, the class interests of the "cultured" African might be identical with those of Empire after all. See Ethiopia Unbound (London: Phillips, 1911) 105; and Chapter 4 of this study.

invocation of a national past deliberately inserts his nation into these very protocols. With Attoh Ahuma factoring a culturalist agenda into the political one, we see a class-for-power thus reading itself as a class-for-the-world, too.

Looking at a peripheral native middle class at the turn of the century, then, we find the burden of powerlessness--created by the colonial alienation of power--and the burden of worldlessness--created by the wholesale alienation of Africa by imperial worlding--pushing it to discover its desiring narratives of empowerment and worlding in the same plane, that of nationality. And as middle class nationalism looks towards the worlding of a Ghana-to-be, we get an intimation of a class characterology beginning to be shaped in its ambit. The worlding of the nation opens up a speculative dimension wherein to frame characterological questions about a collective destiny, about the moral and other agencies that should commit to the realization of this destiny, and so on. We have seen Sarbah in this framework of a national destiny--captured in his allegorical metaphor of "the city of tomorrow"--calling for an educated native responsible to the masses. Within the same framework, we have seen Attoh Ahuma asking in his turn: "But, if we are a Nation, are we self-conscious?" (GCN, 2), indicating that only in a self-consciousness, defined above all by and in terms of a nationalistic imperative, would the touchstone for a responsible morality be found that will undergird the ascendency of a middle class unto power.

A turn of the century Gold Coast class-for-power, a middling generation on the rise, thus comes to seek in national consciousness the authority to proclaim its social and political legitimacy. Class-bound individuals, like Attoh Ahuma, like Sarbah, anticipate

the arrival of their kind in a nationalistically served morality, a morality bearing enough suasive power to give a rising generation representative--that is to say, hegemonic--force over the socio-historical field comprehended by its members as their own. Like Sarbah and Hayford, Attoh Ahuma does not forget where such legitimacy would come from. In the foreword to The Gold Coast Nation, he addresses the rising generation thus: "Intelligent Retrogression is the only Progression that will save our beloved country. This may sound a perfect paradox, but it is, nevertheless, the truth..." (GCN, vii).[50] Given the plurality within which Attoh Ahuma advances Gold Coast nation-ness, the crucial term in that declaration has to be the adjective "intelligent." I will pick up this point shortly below.

As I round off the discussion of his work, I read Attoh Ahuma as a pluralist who had found it pragmatically necessary, as he looked to figure one nation out of the multiform cultural and political organization of Gold Coast nativity, to invent an essential national past. However, included in this demand is also a hint that it would be necessary to temper essence with the kind of critical attention that will bring it into line with the contingent demands urgently imposing on a native world. For the early nationalist, therefore, if the shaping--the worlding, that is--of a salutary middle class character took account of what came from "below," drawing on it as the repository of an immanent native logos, the rationality of political and cultural modernity that he desired this essential logos to assume obliged it to take on an auxiliary character--this in the

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[50] The citation continues: "[A]nd if all educated West Africans could be forced by moral suasion and personal conviction to realize that "Back to the Simple Life" of our progenitors expresses a burning wish to advance, that the desire to rid ourselves of foreign accretions and excrescences is an indispensable condition of National Resurrection and National Prosperity, we should feel ourselves amply rewarded."

"osmotic" sense of drawing on "help" arriving solvently from "above."

Such are the relativist implications to be drawn from the gallant paradoxes polemically advanced by Attoh Ahuma. As we have seen, these paradoxes produce a British colonial formation whose impressive discursive and politico-legal supports make it function in spite of itself as a useful auxiliary for a colonized nativity; a formation thus to be tapped into to fashion out of an otherwise ethnically plural, uncreated Gold Coast (nationally speaking) a sense of a transcendent, imagined community.

The "Gold Coast nation" of Attoh Ahuma emerges then in a two-in-one articulation: in between what is below and what is above--in the middle, that is--an enduring principle of nativity finds the moral and political purposefulness that will augment and consummate its self-creating impetus. The call made by the early nationalist to a middling rising generation to awaken to national consciousness is thus a call to revive and reactivate a submerged but otherwise continuously living past of nativity; a call to do so within and in spite of the contingency alienating this past into a colonialist modernity. Indeed, in Attoh Ahuma's argument, as we have seen, Gold Coast nativity, even in its contingent alienation, showed itself compatible and continuous with the humanistic and nationalistic presuppositions inherent in--but needing, as it were, to be extracted osmotically from--the very medium of its alienation, the imperial-colonial state appearing above it.

The Gold Coast Nation presents one more early literary example of an ontologically self-defined middle embarked on a by no means easy quest, based in the idea of nation, for the creative rubrics that will legitimate and further its self-definition.

In this endeavour we find the seeker in the middle, the early nationalist, affirming his location as able in the present to muster the self-presence required to mediate between, on the one hand, the claims of a continuous, past-legitimated essence (embodied in what Attoh Ahuma and Sarbah refer to respectively as "the people" and "the masses"); and, on the other, the claims of a future-driven contingency, into which the former, in colonial time, had found itself willy nilly displaced. What Attoh Ahuma thus reveals is a middle class compelled, within its reflexive idea of nationhood, to seek and fashion a continuity out of the rupture colonially enforced (though not necessarily colonially created) between nativity and the forms of an impinging modernity. In an important sense, then, the quirky gallantry of his paradoxes are an attempt to "resolve" the problem which, in Sarbah's intuition, as we saw in the last chapter, was the basis of the difficulty of the educated native.

When all is said and done, however, the nationalist who argues a paradoxical continuity in the name of an "osmotic" (or absorbent) middle class, able to draw on a white European, lately colonial, auxiliary to refashion a popular national self-image, leaves us with the merest hint of an answer to what remains an outstanding question for early nationalism. The question may be construed thus: if a middle class, osmotically drawing on the colonial auxiliary to write the nation, had come to deem the past necessary for a present conception of a future to come, what constituted a viable definition of such pastness? Here viability must mean above all the question of how the past was to receive a qualified insertion into nationalism's progressively imagined present. And if the hint of an answer given by Attoh Ahuma appears in the crucial

adjective intelligent, qualifying what he calls "retrogression," it would seem then that, for him, what was at stake was not just an antiquarian "what was our past?" What the adjective does at a stroke, then, is to bring (ethno)historical reconstruction to the centre of early nationalism's political and moral purpose as the quest, in the here and now, for a responsible mediation of the past.

We may infer in that case that the early nationalist's point is made not so much about an eternally "pure"--i.e., univocal--past, simply available to be retrieved, as it is made about the contingent presentness of the past; about the past as a site where libidinal investments are to be, have been, or will be made by a present containing decidedly plural interests; a present which, as a consequence, rendered the past a mediate site reflexive of its immediate concerns and contentions. Intelligent retrogression might therefore be read, given Attoh Ahuma's demonstrated awareness of Gold Coast plurality, as a caveat.

But if so what kind of caveat? This question is a relevant one as we move on to examine the forces that will come into play in early and mid-century to transform the "Gold Coast nation" into its successor "Ghana."

As we step below in this chapter onto the discursive road leading from a Ghana of the ideal "past" to its modern counterpart (and also in the chapters to come), we will need to shape Attoh Ahuma's caveat as a reminder for our own time. The point then is that, regarding the question of the past and its present uses, a consideration of the contentious variability of interest--a consideration lying at the productive heart of the question: what kind of "people," ideally, were we?; and, based on that, what kind of

nation might we, ideally, be(come)?--is precisely that which we are not at liberty to overlook.

The time has come, therefore, to turn to the production of, and subsequent struggle over, "the people of Ghana." It is an occasion also to place this contest where it relevantly belongs: within the nationalist characterology of a middle class, a characterology possessed of a wish-fulfilling mode which, as the last chapter was at pains to establish, actively partakes of that functional modification of the modern which yields us the problematic of African modernity. It is from within this matrix that this study submits "Ghana," in its various idealizations (or stylizations, if you will), to the test, as Appiah would have it, of the interest-relativity lurking at the heart of any and all such idealization.[51]

II. White "Auxiliary," Native Understudy: From the Akan Geistesgeshichte of Rev. Balmer to the Akanized "Ghana" of Danquah/Meyerowitz--and Beyond

> This meeting with Europeans on the coast of Guinea is destined to be the most decisive event in the history of the Negro peoples and, if rightly used by them, will enable them to recover once again a position of power and influence among the nations of the earth, not only equal to that which they held in the far-off days of the vanished kingdom of Ghana, but one which will far exceed it in all that is worthy of esteem. The right use of their present opportunity will depend upon their learning how to avoid the fatal cause which ruined them as a people in the past.
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> --Rev W. T. Balmer, A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast (1907-11; 1925) [emphasis mine]

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[51] As argued by Appiah, cognitive idealizations, whether of the natural or human world--Appiah gives another name for this as "theory," but it might just as well be "history" or "myth"--proceed from an interest in influencing that world. Idealization then is the containing mould by which interested men and women will the reduction of the real world to a predictable, hence controllable, shape. See Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Tolerable Falsehoods: Agency and the Interests of Theory," in Consequences of Theory, eds. Jonathan Arac and Barbara Johnson (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1991) 63-90.

> By Mr Balmer's conspectus the Akan people themselves are for the first time enabled to see themselves clearly in relation to mankind in general.
> --C. W. Welman, Secretary for (Gold Coast) Native Affairs, Preface to Balmer's History [emphasis mine]

The Gold Coast, April 15, 1948: this day could be read as one of those dotting human history that tell of a watershed when the slow evolution of an oppressed people's psychology, finding itself coalescing around a congenial, transcendent symbol of self-definition, suddenly reaches a heroic consciousness of destiny. On this day, from the leadership ranks of the respected vanguard intelligentsia of the Gold Coast middle class, Dr. J. B. Danquah publicly proposed that the name of the Colony be changed to "Ghana." The latter was a name that had been in limited circulation in the coteries, circles and clubs of a Gold Coast nationalist vanguard since 1928 when Danquah had professed in writing--among the first prominent natives to do so in our century--that there were historical links between the Akan of the Gold Coast and the medieval western Sudan empire Ghana.[52]

In the build-up to and following Danquah's 1948 proclamation, as Goody notes:

> the Ghana theory [had] became an established part of nationalist ideology. Private schools were named Ghana Colleges, the motto "Ghana Boy" was painted above the cabins of innumerable mammy lorries...To the populace the use of the term meant a rejection of the colonial status implied by "the Gold Coast."[53]

What had taken place was a successful engineering of mass revulsion against the

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[52] Rev. J. B. Anaman's Gold Coast Guide (London, 1895) is perhaps the first native statement in print of the Gold Coast-Old Ghana connection. Imperial Ghana, which covered parts of what more or less makes up present-day Mali, is said to have lasted for more than a thousand years. Danquah first mentions the link in The Akim Abuakwa Handbook (London: Forster Groom, 1928).

[53] Jack Goody, "The Myth of a State" Journal of Modern African Studies 6.4 (1968): 473.

infelicitous colonial "trademark" first imposed on a strip of the coast of Guinea by European mercantile interests, a name later adapted to suit the convenience of the Crown as a common reference to all the territory coextensive with this portion of the West African coast covered by British administration and jurisdiction. It is to Danquah's credit that he mooted "Ghana" again, and, giving it wide-ranging acceptance in the Colony, invented the most efficacious symbol around which the anti-colonial struggle would come to articulate its purposes, and out of which it would draw its moral and political meanings of nationalist authenticity.

Danquah was the nationalist leader of note to emerge in the period intervening between the demise of Casely Hayford in 1930 and the ascendency of Kwame Nkrumah in the late-1940s. As leading spokesperson of the youth of the Gold Coast of his time--otherwise known as the rising generation--Danquah had been prominent in 1929 in the founding of the organization known as the Gold Coast Youth Conference. This organization, in the hyperbole of a sympathetic observer, was "the only militant organization [from 1930-1946] preparing the minds of the youth towards eventual self-government."[54] Lapsing into inactivity soon after it had been convened, the Youth

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[54] K. G. Konuah, cited by Kwa O. Hagan in "The Literary and Social Clubs of the Past: Their Role in National Awakening in Ghana" Okyeame 4.2 (1969): 85. Membership of the Youth Conference was by way of these Literary and Social Clubs, widely distributed in and open to the youth of the Colony. Danquah's canalization of the activities of the Clubs into a would-be central directorate, the Conference, can be seen, as in Konuah's terms, as one of the effective ways in which a middle class vanguard had begun to assert an enabling pedagogical, if not political, counterweight against colonial hegemony. Consider, for instance, Danquah's versifying charge to the Youth of the Gold Coast (1938), reproduced by Hagan on the same page cited:

> Buck up, O Youth and kill the bogey!
> The bogey that your race is infant!
> Know ye not that God is busy,
> And helps only the few who are constant?

The point I advance below is that, decisive though Danquah's nationalist pedagogy may have been, like the poem above, it could hardly rise above its derivativeness. Hence the counterhegemonic claims made on this pedagogy's

Conference would be revived once more by Danquah in 1938 and, subsequently, metamorphose into the vanguard nationalist movement the United Gold Coast Convention. It is the U.G.C.C. that in 1947 would initiate, and itself be one of the leading actors in, the final act of the drama (although it would, so to speak, have faded from view by the final scene) culminating in the Independence of the Colony in 1957. On this occasion the Gold Coast would take on the seemingly endogenously derived name Ghana.

But whence this symbolic "Ghana," this ideal mooted and popularized by Danquah as a replacement of the tag of colonial convenience the Gold Coast?

To tell the story of the invention and subsequent "academicization" and popularization of the myth-ideal "Ghana" is to recapitulate not only the genealogy of a contestation but that also of a collaboration, a compromise even, acted out between black and white, native and auxiliary, in the colonial setting. It is an endeavour that must first bring us to what native agencies like Danquah, starting out as absorbent, would-be middle class types in close contact with the auxiliaries of the white colonial establishment, could be tutored to become: native auxiliaries in their turn. In the relationship between the bright native youth of the Colony and European mentors that defined the field of formal colonial pedagogy, the Danquahs represented potential middle class types waiting to be appropriately moulded, thanks to the prestige a European education had come to wield in colonial African space, into representative mouthpieces of and role models for the Gold Coast youth.

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behalf by Konuah are quite simply overstated.

If these youth needed to be so mentored, we might suppose that it was because the powers-that-be had projected correctly that the Danquahs of the European-educated rising generation would come to occupy influential leadership roles in the future of the Colony. For this reason, this rising generation could be seen potentially as providing the malleable material that, shaped by an appropriate pedagogy, might be relied upon to provide the small but vital spark which, characterologically speaking, would induce the generality of the youth into "spontaneous" reform of the kind approved by power.

That a calculating, interventionist colonial enterprise of this nature, aimed at reforming the native character, was a historical reality is what I have attempted to capture in the two epigraphs I have juxtaposed at the head of this section. Both are taken from Rev. W. T. Balmer's A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast (1925). In them I find the statement of a white colonial complicity; a complicity in which the native son Danquah's "Ghana" more or less participates and which it perpetuates.

The two epigraphs, then, are set up as a preliminary to investigating why two agents of Empire, the Christian missionary and educator, Rev. Balmer, and the colonial administrator, Welman, would have found a common ground from where to assume an apparently "disinterested" pedagogical responsibility for rehabilitating the Colony in an appropriate past. On this ground where religious and secular orders meet and overlap, where metaphysical and political eschatology are reconciled, the stage is set for the white man's burden, organized around the topos of pastness, to be given a classic, peculiarly Gold Coast performance. And since, in this performance, Balmer's insistence on what he calls the "right use" of the past is one that already presupposes a potential for its

wrong use, it is only proper that we interrogate Balmer's history and its promoters about what exactly the appropriate past might consist in. With what pedagogical stakes, in effect, did Balmer invest his history in the present of its conception? And, aided and abetted by Welman, what political stakes did the missionary's history carry for the future?

Posing the questions the way I have done implies a refusal to take the expatriates' performance at face value; instead these questions demand that we read with a healthy skepticism between the lines. For between the justification of the missionary's endeavour at historical reconstruction and the administrator's endorsement, what we have is a manifesto of a reformist colonial pedagogy in which a Gold Coast "Spirit," a metaphysics of abiding selfhood, produced and wrapped in attractive Hegelian packaging, finds itself poised for a long-term collaboration with colonial political goals.

Of the Akan of the Gold Coast Balmer writes in his preface: "there has been a definable purpose at work moulding the career of these people." Quoting an authority who writes in the mode of the Hegelian Geistesgeschichte, Balmer concludes therefore:

> It will always make for better history to generalize the soul of [such] a people and regard it as a uniform striving towards self-realization amid continual change of circumstance, than to detail the endless circumstances without reference to the controlling purpose that utilizes or resists them.

Indeed, for the expatriate historian, imparting the lessons of the past between 1907 and 1911 to his students at the elite Cape Coast institution, Mfantsipim School--it is these lessons that would be published in monograph form in 1925--if a native elite, the "present representatives of the chief actors in [the] drama [of the past] could be led to grasp that purpose, make it more spiritual and follow it loyally then assuredly there

would be a future for them as a nation."[55] For an otherwise multiform Colony, then, the future held the potential of a "real unity," but this would be so only insofar as history could be pedagogically enlisted to "set forth plainly the desirability and worthiness of, and the way to this goal."[56]

The motivations behind Balmer's inspiration to be an auxiliary, a midwife assisting in the birth of a wholesome Gold Coast national character, invite comparison with the better-known anthropological exertions made, as it were, on behalf of the natives of Africa by yet another missionary, the Belgian Fr. Placide Tempels. Tempels's quest, like Balmer's, was for an undifferentiated Bantu principle, an African essence worthy of insertion into the civilizational course of mainstream History. The result of his ambitious effort to produce one, based on his (amateur) ethnographic researches conducted among the people of colonial Belgian Congo, appears in the landmark work Bantu Philosophy (1949).

If Balmer valorizes the colonial encounter positively as the most decisive event, civilizationally, to have happened to the peoples of West Africa, preparing the way for the Negro to be revealed to himself, in much the same spirit Tempels would claim the salutary discovery of the "Bantu ideal," a vital element, alas, lost to the decadent Bantu themselves. That the Bantu are unremembering is precisely what would lead Tempels to deny their ideal any possibility of immanent self-fulfilment. Instead, the idiosyncratic conclusion he reaches is a self-serving, Eurocentric one: "It is in Christianity alone,"

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[55] Rev. W. T. Balmer, A History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969) 14. Emphasis mine.

[56] Balmer, Akan Peoples 15.

Tempels writes, "that the Bantu will find relief for their secular yearning and a complete satisfaction of their deepest aspirations.... Christianity...is the only possible consummation of the Bantu ideal."[57]

In time and space the English missionary and his Belgian counterpart may have operated in different colonial locations, but the prescriptions made by the one in British West Africa are interchangeable with those to be made later by the other in Belgian Central Africa. Both, in fact, read themselves not only as working in native space but on it as well; and they see themselves as doing this ideally on behalf of la mission civilisatrice europeene. As such we need to make their endeavours resonate relevantly within a larger problematic: that characterized by the Zairean philosopher V. Y. Mudimbe as the (European) invention of Africa. As spelt out in Mudimbe's own investigations, an attention to this problematic, coming with post-imperial hindsight, is one that must necessarily invite the question of how, and for whom, (colonial) Africa came to be constituted as a reality for knowledge.[58]

In Tempels's reconciliation of the spiritual and secular yearning of the Bantu, we find, as much in the manner of the collaboration that we find between Balmer and Welman in The History of the Akan Peoples, a remarkable concurrence between the missionary's position and the colonial administrator's. It would seem that the ideology of Empire had reached a stage where it scorned the trick of naturalizing and justifying the belligerent Darwinism which enforced, as we saw above, Sir Cust's radical separation

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[57] Placide Tempels, Bantu Philosophy, trans. Colin King (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1959) 16, 18.

[58] V. Y. Mudimbe, The Invention of Africa (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1988).

of dominant superior and subordinate inferior in the colonial relation. Empire could now, from the turn of the century on, feel the need to present itself, in a guise of social meliorism, as the intimation of a global commonwealth. In this cooperative guise, Empire reads itself into a reinterpreted metaphysics of history: a suitably retooled Weltgeist, now proposing an ameliorative objective in the Colony, does the ideological work of justifying and securing in the long term Empire's political, economic and cultural goals.

That by the early-twentieth century these goals had come to require explicit redefinition and justification in the ideology of Empire is evident in the hopeful prognoses, in 1908, of Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer. Astute colonial governor of India and Egypt, and above all a diligent servant of Empire whose words carried weight, Cromer's prognoses concerned those fortunate enough to have fallen under British imperial tutelage: "Egyptians, or Shilluks, or Zulus...these people who are all, nationally speaking [emphasis mine], more or less in statu pupillari." He concludes on behalf of these subject peoples:

> There may then at all events be some hope that the Egyptian will hesitate before he throws in his lot with any future Arabi [figure of Egyptian resistance].... Even the Central African savage may eventually learn to chant a hymn in honour of Astraea Redux, as represented by the British official who denies him gin but gives him justice."[59]

The national ideal is not to be denied the colonies here; even the lowliest savage, according to Cromer, may be taught to aspire and, aspiring, become a candidate for the

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[59] Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer, is cited by Edward Said in Orientalism (New York: Vintage-Random House, 1979) 37. Note that the seed of Cromer's views are contained in Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous "Minute" on Indian education, written in 1835. (See Curtin, Imperialism 178-191). Note also that in the geographical parlance of British imperialism in Cromer's day, Central Africa evoked the Niger-Benue basin, an area that is today considered a part of the West African subregion.

higher humanity of nationhood. However, what Cromer gives with one hand he is also obliged to take away with the other. Since the colonies, as it turns out, were in statu pupillari merely; since colonials were children needing to be tutored into majority, it was only by remaining in Empire's cooperative embrace after all that they, Empire's diligent pupils, would be raised to, and maintain, the stature of nations.

Cromer's problem addresses, among other things, the question of how the colonies are to be sub-canonized, as it were, in discursive cooperation with an enfolding imperial canonicity. If so the generous allowance he makes for the colonials' incorporation into the modes of British civility--made with an authority deriving from his impressive background of imperial service--has not a little to do with the rhetoric of the missionary historiographer of the (Akanized) Gold Coast Soul. And, moreover, if nation enters Cromer's polemic as the bearer of the canonic idea (of which Empire and the imperial official--who denies the native gin but gives him justice--represent the transcendental embodiment), it does so as a window opening onto a space where questions of the disposition, taste and appreciation of the native in the colony--questions of what is appropriate behaviour for him/her and what is not--are to be decided. In short, inserted into a demand to invent the appropriately pro-imperialist subject, Cromer's and Balmer's pedagogy-unto-nationhood (abetted by Welman) underwrites a self-servingly conservative colonial characterology.

In the idealization that foresees a future filled with grateful ex-savages chanting to the Astraea Redux, metropolitan culture--at the service of imperial economics--expands and secures its canonicity further in a give-and-take: just as tributary feeds mainstream

and just as the former may be said to feed off the glory of the latter, it is the modes of sub-canonicity imparted by the centre at and to the periphery that Cromer imagines will return to feed the centre in a virtuous imperial circle.

The foregoing must prompt us to examine closely what Welman could have intended when he floated the thesis that the strength of Balmer's history was in its permitting the Akan to see themselves for the first time in relation to "mankind in general." Why for the first time--an expression carrying the unmistakable hint of initiation? And why do we have the sense that he speaks from the position of a supreme guardian who is now able to give his benighted wards permission, withheld before, to see themselves in the light of day? And yet this light of day for which the Akan are supposed to be grateful does not come gratis. For the thesis "mankind in general" is hardly a "free" one; on the contrary it is bound to and euphemizes what we have already seen as the long-lived process by which Europe had usurped the General into its self-constitution. The matter of retrieving a history of the Akan peoples of the Gold Coast may be read, therefore, as an exercise in imperial self-reference, an exercise on the colonial periphery calculated to further the ambitions of British imperial worlding.

Reading the Akan then as possessing an illustrious imperial pedigree of their own, as Balmer does when he adduces historical "evidence" locating their origin in the medieval western Sudan empire of Ghana, was to fit the Gold Coast into the ideology of an imperial commonwealth of nations so eloquently articulated by Cromer. Thus, in the hands of the missionary and the colonial administrator, the Gold Coast nation receives its civilizational sub-canonicity all right, but it is invited to do so in accordance with the

standards canonized and specified by the imperial Overlord.

And what were the operational terms of the standard? Let us consider the writ of comparative European raciology as it circulated within Europe itself in the nineteenth century (and well into the twentieth). In the distinctions of hierarchy made between the white "races," the Anglo-Saxon, on whose Empire the sun never set, came out on top by his own measure as "approaching God's ideal [human] type." Important for us at this point though is how the heritage of Anglo-Saxonism--given romantic historicist expression by such movements as the Young Englanders in the late-nineteenth century--lies athwart Balmer's effort. The member of the self-defined aristocracy of races, finding both colonial motive and opportunity, makes to order a parallel aristocracy of tribes, the Akan, in the West African setting of the Gold Coast. Out of that will issue the heritage of "Ghana," a heritage standardized originally in accord with the new, cooperative design of Empire.

I will be arguing prominently in the next chapter (and subsequently) that any consideration of the invention of Africa in (a colonialist) modernity must be fundamentally prepared to grapple with contradiction and paradox. In effect, for this study--and we have seen something of this in Attoh Ahuma's argumentation--African modernity gives its predisposition in a paradoxical play of possibility in liability, opportunity in constraint, and vice versa. As a sub-theme in the mode of the invention of Africa, Balmer's "Ghana," then, must be seen as straddling both terms, at once proferring possibility and liability; and its resultant thus requires to be engaged in those

terms.

With this critical consideration before us it is now time to give attention to the influence of the missionary historian. We must consider how the history of the white auxiliary, considering that it went through fifteen printings (with sponsorship coming, no doubt, from the colonial establishment), must have been hugely successful in tapping deeply and directly into the worldly desire of a Gold Coast class-for-power seeking the normative basis of its nationalist characterology.[60]

More likely than not Balmer's work, directly and indirectly, provided topics for discussion in the agencies operating on behalf of a Gold Coast middle class nationalist characterology--the aforementioned phenomenon of Literary, Youth and Social Clubs that brought the youth together, providing channels for informal education networks to be formed, and forums for discussing affairs of note in the Colony. Today these Clubs are largely forgotten, but from the turn of the last century to the middle of the twentieth they were agencies that actively disseminated a pedagogy whose avowed aims were, in essence, nationalist.[61]

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[60] Balmer's influence on Gold Coast nationalist Magnus Sampson (of Fanti extraction) is obvious. Sampson devotes his Gold Coast Men of Affairs (1937; London: Dawsons, 1969) to the "memory of my old Principal and devoted Guardian, the late Rev. W. T. Balmer...a true lover of the African..." In a work honouring the achievements of Gold Coast nationalism, it is Balmer's portrait which takes pride of place by appearing on the frontispiece. The rather lengthy introduction to the work (some thirty pages), incidentally, is furnished by J. B. Danquah, who writes: "The Gold Coast people are everlastingly in [Sampson's] debt for rendering them this service of inestimable value, for, from these cameo pictures of the life-stories of our great men and leaders, the youth of Mr. Sampson's age and those coming after would draw their inspiration, emulate the work of their forebears, and wherever possible, attempt to excel in the greatness of their contribution to our common inheritance...I have yet to meet a historical study of the kind more faithful to our articulate national ideal..."(38).

[61] Hagan quotes the revered Gold Coast (inter)nationalist, Dr. Kwegyir Aggrey ("Aggrey of Africa"), urging the youth of the Clubs in 1924 "to equip themselves intellectually and morally in order to to be able in the near future to shoulder responsibilities as citizens and leaders of an emerging country." On Aggrey's influence on the young Kwame Nkrumah, future leader of independent Ghana, see the latter's Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (New York: International Publishers, 1971) 14-15.

It is Danquah, a stalwart of the Clubs who, on the native side, as has already been noted, would be the first, after Balmer, to stake the Akan claim to origin from Ghana in his Akim Abuakwa Handbook (1928). In so doing Danquah will go one up on Casely Hayford who, in a manner not unlike the English missionary, had also waged a conservative campaign in his Ethiopia Unbound on behalf of a normative African soul-principle that might be thought to reveal itself as a "uniform striving towards self-realization amid continual change of circumstance."

Ethiopia Unbound, whose exploration of an "Ethiopian" metaphysics is based on its author's Fanti lifeworld, appeared in 1911; by 1925, when Balmer's history appeared in monograph form, it would seem from its title alone that the area of ethnohistorical and metaphysical enquiry was being broadened from an original, parochial Fanti base--the Akan sub-group to which Hayford and Sarbah belonged--into a more generally "Akanized" invention of the Gold Coast nation.[62] And in the new native endeavour, the discursive Akanization of Gold Coast nationalism starting in the late-1920s, the figure of note is surely Danquah.

In a series of writings on the Ghana connection, Danquah, scion of the royal house of yet another Akan subgroup, Akim Abuakwa, would be concerned to show--and his royal background had to have been a strong factor in his demonstration--that his country could claim an imperial genealogy, and one, moreover, whose civilizational

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[62] The ideological inevitability of Akanization is revealed, for instance, in the nationalist imaginings of J. W. de Graft Johnson. In his 1928 work, Towards Nationhood in West Africa (London: Frank Cass, 1971), the Fanti-Akan Johnson foresees "the auspicious moment" when "Ashantees, Akims, Akwapims, Fantees, Gas (non-Akan), Ewes (non-Akan), Ahantas, and all (non-Akan), would be drawn together in one great Akan organization, such as would have naturally evolved if Britain had not intervened too early in the history of the Gold Coast and Ashanti" (127; emphasis mine).

pedigree could be thought to parallel that of the ruling house of the British colonial overlord. In effect if in Danquah's work the past- and imperially-oriented Akanization of the Gold Coast translated into the salutary worlding of "Ghana"--as approved in Balmer's essentialism--this was a construct that was constrained to come dressed in the garb of the very colonial imperialism it was designed to "overthrow." Sankofa in Danquah's "Ghana" could thus be read as a cooperative, homegrown version of an imported conservative, centrist and elitist discourse, a model and style of nationalist articulation routed through, and rubber-stamped by, the artifices and protocols of colonial-imperial prestige.[63] A sub-theme in the agenda of attribution writing African modernity, Danquah's "Ghana" was a construct that suffered itself to be hijacked into the agenda of colonial-imperialism.

Such finally, it seems, is the understanding we must bring to the productive collaboration, regarding the Ghana connection, between Danquah and Eva L. R. Meyerowitz, one-time art supervisor at Achimota College, the premier institution founded in 1927 by the colonial government to train the elite of the Colony. Mrs Meyerowitz, as Goody informs us, is on record as having declared Danquah to be the "inspirer of her researches, and he on his part has applauded her discovery of the connexions [of the

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[63] Cf. Peter Carstens insight that: "the retention or revival of tenuous [ethnic] loyalties are resources available to persons to establish prestige or esteem...[T]he surest way to achieve recognition, prestige and esteem in the eyes of the ruling class as well as from the local(s)...is to participate in the externally imposed educational and religious institutions." [Here we might add "externally imposed discursive institutions," as that appropriate to our discussion]. He concludes: "it is only by manipulation of...internal [ethnic] status systems that [such persons] are able to gain access to other status sytems which are located in a higher class. The strategy of status manipulation is best seen then as a means of crossing class boundaries." This excerpt is from Carstens' "Problems of peasantry and social class in Southern Africa" (1970), a conference paper, and is cited by Immanuel Wallerstein, "Class and status in contemporary Africa," in African Social Studies, ed. P. Gutkind and P. Waterman (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1977) 279.

Akan] with the 'ancient heliolithic cultures which once flourished in the Mediterranean and the Ancient East.'"[64] In the 1950s when Danquah had to restake and reiterate "The Akan Claim to Origin from Ghana" (1955)--a thesis that he had advanced in an appendix to his 1944 work The Akan Doctrine of God[65]--Mrs. Meyerowitz would not be far behind him, presenting her defence of this claim in "The Akan and Ghana" in 1957. Both endeavours would be directed against the skeptical contrary claims made by commentators like Raymond Mauny in "The question of Ghana" (1954).[66]

The fruit of Meyerowitz's amateur ethnohistorical researches--the earliest such research conducted among the Akan in 1945-46 was underwritten, suggestively enough, by the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund--began to appear in the 1950s. Her first monograph is The Sacred State of the Akan,[67] which sacralizes Akan statehood in an unmistakable royalist effort. In this and subsequent works she would seek concurrently to imperialize, "whiten," and "Orientalize" her recurrent subject--the Akan (ruling aristocracy) and Ghana. All these pseudo-historical moves may be read in retrospect as feeding into the late ideological quest by imperial Europe at the colonial periphery for auxiliary, self-serving modes of (ethno)centrism, a quest incorporated in the project I

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[64] Goody, "Myth of a State" 468.

[65] Danquah's thesis is that "Ghana" is an Arab corruption of an original "Akane" or "Akana" which is "said to mean 'foremost, genuine.'" These names, he further suggests, should be seen as coinciding with the "old Babylonian race known as Akkad, Agade or Akana." See the entry on "Akan," Appendix II, The Akan Doctrine of God (London: Lutterworth, 1944) 198-199. See also the entries of "Ananse" (199-190) and "Ga" (201). The ethnic Ga strangely become a "branch of the original Twi or Twui(-speaking Akan) race."

[66] Mauny's essay appears in Africa (July 1954): 200-213; Danquah's in West African Review (Nov. 1955): 968-970 and (Dec. 1955): 1107-1111. Mrs. Meyerowitz's "The Akan and Ghana" appears in Man 57 (June 1957): 83-88.

[67] London: Faber and Faber, 1951.

have identified as civilizational sub-canonization.

Take for instance these "discoveries" that Meyerowitz makes about the Akan in her researches: "Akan civilization," she writes, "is essentially pre-Arab North African in character, and the claim of some of the Akan that their ancestors had been of a white race and originally came from the Sahara is unlikely to be fiction." Or, again:

> Akan culture and civilization is not Negro-African in origin but can be classed, on the whole, as Libyo-Berber, more precisely perhaps as Libyo-Phoenician or Carthaginian ...a civilization which owed almost everything to the Near East and Egypt.

Or, yet again: "One can safely deduce...that the ancestors of the present Akan aristocracy were Saharan Libyan Berbers."[68] Here, in the revelation and dissemination of the elite white origins of the Akan genius to the, perhaps, unremembering Akan themselves, we find the Balmer-Tempels wish-fulfilling complex working itself out once again through the agency of yet another European auxilliary. (It does seem that, for Meyerowitz, claiming for the Akan kinship with, let us say, St. Augustine, a pre-Arab North African Berber,[69] patristic luminary of the Roman Catholic Church, and one of the central cultural icons of Western civilization, was to achieve a satisfactory insertion of the Gold Coast into the Occidental problematic of worlding--as given in Hegel's speculative Philosophy of History).

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[68] Meyerowitz, The Akan of Ghana: Their Ancient Beliefs (London: Faber and Faber, 1960) 21, 15; and Akan Traditions of Origin (London: Faber and Faber, 1952) 124. Emphasis mine. On page 87 of "The Akan and Ghana," Mrs. Meyerowitz concludes from the available "evidence" that "over a thousand years the Ghana people and the Akan (Saharan Libyan Berbers) by intermarrying with negro aboriginals in the western Sudan, underwent considerable racial modifications and admixtures."

[69] The Berbers, said originally to be from Northern Europe, settled North Africa some two to three thousand years ago.

Little wonder, then, that a skeptical Goody has this to say of Mrs Meyerowitz's "insights": "she sheds little light and considerable confusion."[70] Still, the element of confusion notwithstanding, Mrs Meyerowitz disposes in such a fashion what Danquah first successfully proposes that we cannot but see her as usurping--to return to a metaphor that we have used before--the original endeavour of the native into becoming a tributary obedient to the pull of a cultural-political discourse reinvented by and for the imperial mainstream. Thus it is that Danquah's success at cultural name-making--and its effect was not an inconsiderable one--was fated to come already framed and contained by an advance guard of impressive, mutually reinforcing formations emanating from the imperial metropole. We might number among these the intellectual high moralism characteristic of the Victorian era (as seen, for instance, in Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy); the jingoistic Anglo-Saxonism of such as the Young Englanders; and the classic civilizational historicism underwritten, as we have seen, by the conservative Occidental idealism founded by Hegel.

Still, to be fair, any assessment of Danquah's culturalist achievement must credit him with having given shape in and through "Ghana" to a general structure of feeling, as the late English cultural historian Raymond Williams might have put it. And in the arena of anti-colonial contestation in the Gold Coast, this aspect of myth-making and social idealization, this finding of an appropriate symbol around which attitudes might cohere, finally mattered.

But there needed, it seems, to be more than an invocation of a symbolic past,

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[70] Jack Goody, "The ethnohistory of the Akan in Ghana" Africa 29.1 (Jan. 1959): 79.

however glorious. Reading Danquah's achievement shows us that if a compatible structure of value must needs accompany and inform a structure of feeling as the latter's sustenance, then his "Ghana" was lacking in this important respect. It is not enough, therefore, for Goody to put matters the way he does when, in summarizing the Ghana connection, he suggests that the "adoption of the name of an ancient kingdom legitimizes the status of [the] newly founded nation."[71] That must remain an incomplete reading of what happened in the case of the entity that would become Ghana in 1957. For it is only insofar as, following the proclamation of 1948, the myth-ideal of "Ghana" had been displaced into a sensuous programme; only insofar as an active human symbol had intervened to incarnate the ideal as the possibility of secular transformation; only then would the peoples of the Gold Coast come to discover in "Ghana" the foundations of national--as opposed to merely ethnocentric--legitimacy. And for this momentous shift in value, as I hope to demonstrate in my reading of Kwame Nkrumah's autobiography in Chapter 5, Danquah's elitist, backward-looking and neo-royalist Akan-centrism could hardly have sufficed.

Continuing boldly in the tradition of radical anti-colonial contestation introduced into the Gold Coast in the 1930s by the Sierra Leonean labour activist I. T. A. Wallace Johnson and the Nigerian journalist Nnamdi Azikiwe,[72] it is Nkrumah who will bring a new brand of nationalist politics to postwar Gold Coast. In the process he will

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[71] Goody, "Myth of a State" 473

[72] Johnson was the leader of the West African Youth League. Azikiwe and he were deported from the Gold Coast by the colonial authorities for fomenting "sedition." Azikiwe went on to become the first President of independent Nigeria in 1960.

appropriate and successfully insert a popular past into a competitively redefined--as opposed to Danquah's more or less cooperative--characterology of a nationalist middle class. Wresting "Ghana" from Danquah, Nkrumah will translate the name from idealist myth into concrete programme. Thus, on the road to Independence, it is in Nkrumahist ideopraxis, finally, that "Ghana," considered from the standpoint of short term success at least,[73] discovers and seals its consummation.

III. Afterword: Reviewing "Ghana," "Africa," and the Black (Man's) Burden of Creativity in (a Colonialist) Modernity

> We were created and are not creators; recipients at the point of a gun, not givers, at the point of an assegai.
> - -Kofi Awoonor, Ghanaian Writer.

To the British poet Dame Edith Sitwell goes the credit of penning the following lines about Africa in her poem "Gold Coast Customs" (1929). In them the customs of the Gold Coast are put to poetic work on behalf of an "Africa" that:

> is the unhistorical,
> Unremembering, unrhetorical,
> Undeveloped spirit involved
> In the conditions of nature--Man
> That black image of stone hath delved

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[73] As a long term objective "Ghana" has proved elusive, as witnessed by the titles of Ayi Kwei Armah's negative The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (1968) and Kojo Laing's "groping" novel Search, Sweet Country (1986). On the question of elusive nationhood see the rather pretentious essay by Peter Skalnik, "Why Ghana is not a nation-state" Africa Insight 22.1 (1992): 66-72.

On the threshold where history began.[74]

By its clearly Hegelian wording, Sitwell's poem establishes the conviviality of its message with a longstanding rhetorical and philosophical tradition. This is the European tradition that had created itself by uncreating Africa, rendering the latter as Nothing to its Everything. If the topos of the white man's burden shapes itself by drawing for credit on the readily available fund of this uncreated entity, it is this same fund of Nothingness that will impose itself on the black man as the burden of liability that alienates him into worldlessness.

Perhaps, nowhere is this corollary of credit and liability more in evidence than in the pedagogical circuits of exchange involving black and white in the, by definition, unequal colonial relation. If the pedagogical relation can be imagined as that between white analyst and native patient, then it is the case that the former draws disproportionate credit by both speaking the latter's illness and shaping a cure for it. And this is because

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[74] Selected Poems of Edith Sitwell Introd. John Lehmann (London: Macmillan, 1965) 67. See her Hegelian justifications on pp. 141-143. Consider what might be an apologetic response to "Gold Coast Customs" in the ff. lines by Ghanaian poet Dorothy Kurankyi-Taylor, aptly titled "The Sensible Attitude":

No, no, we do not believe in these things,
these relics of the pre-imperial days.
They have their place beside the buccaneers,
the slave-marts, and Arabian merchandize,
and warring tribesmen, and blood feuds and things;
and they have left their tears about the hours
and in the very laughter of the years,
and cursed the places and the names with tales.
Yes, they are things far better left to die...
But there is pathos in these foolish faiths,
these last strongholds of a defeated race
whose gods have played them false...
these dark beliefs of a forgotten time,
these whispers from the dead. How mystery-laden
are their parent sepulchres, how vacant.

See Reflected Thoughts (Ilfracombe: Stockwell, 1959) 31.

the lowly native is thought to be imprisoned in the liability of not knowing, let alone having the ability to diagnose, his own sickness (i.e., the sickness derived for him by the knowing analyst). The diagnosis of Sitwell's poem, if it perpetuates a tradition, is nothing more and nothing less than a restatement of the place of sickness, the created worldlessness, from where Balmer's pedagogy for the Negro and Tempels' for the Bantu (and for that matter the "revisionist" politics of Cromer and Welman) begin to shape a cure. For, as we have seen, what both missionaries read as Africa's human failure to remember translates into the moral infirmity of her peoples; and moral infirmity, in a further extension, translates into a history of fatality, which, as such, finally is no history at all. Indeed, we may surmise in the case of Balmer, operating in the Gold Coast, that the evidence of such fatality was there before him in what his own experience would render to him as the babel of disunited peoples of the polyglot country. The fact of the matter then is that in Balmer's conspectus it is not Europe that had self-servingly created the uncreated Negro; it had to be the Negro himself onto whom the responsibility, and hence the burden, of worldlessness--his Nothingness, that is--was shifted: since it was he who had been heedless of his own creation, it followed that it was he who had to be rendered blameworthy for the fatality of his lowly colonial estate.

Balmer in his foreword is thus the knowing analyst anatomizing the psyche of the race, establishing the ambient flaw in the racial character, and complementarily bringing to it the gift of the cure that will restore it to history--and hence humanity. Cured into remembrance, the racial patient, Balmer's Negro, could only thenceforth assume moral responsibility for itself; and, as the missionary prognosticates further, an educable elite's

assumption of such responsibility translates salutarily into nation-ness as a retrieval of historical continuity out of otherwise meaningless fatality. This, ultimately, is the Creator entrusting an auxiliary creativity to his creation with a vengeance; and thus we are to understand Danquah's "Ghana," as an articulation given in the unfolding of the mythos of the white man's burden in colonial Gold Coast. Reading his "Ghana" the way I have, then, is meant to reveal how such auxilary creativity proceeds directly out of the worldless condition of alienation imposed on the black man; how this, subsequently, becomes his burden of worlding.

Taking a critical, retrospective look at the white auxilliary's gift of "Ghana" to his native understudy and collaborator, as we have done, can only remind us, finally, of the injunction to "beware of the Greeks when they come bearing gifts." The paradoxical implication carried by the saying should remind us, then, that such a thing as Balmer's gift never was free. In the pedagogies promising an amelioration of the burden of worldlessness alienating Africa into a colonialist modernity, the intention may have been to shape possibilities for the native at the receiving end. However well-intentioned[75] such thought may have been though, in the unequal relations of power and representation obtaining between auxiliary and understudy in colonial Gold Coast, the possibilities sponsoring and underwriting the invention of "Ghana" were such as to have been more or less to power's advantage. In the circumstances "Ghana" was not given to the native

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[75] On the well-intentioned auxilliary, cf. the caveat of Casely Hayford, citing the turn-of-the-century "conscience of Empire," Mary Kingsley: "The philanthropist is a person who loves man; but he or she is frequently no better than people who kill lap-dogs by overfeeding, or who shut up skylarks in cages; while it is quite conceivable to me, for example, that a missionary could kill a man to save his soul, a philanthropist kills his soul to save his life..." See The West African Land Question 6.

in advance as pure becoming; rather, as I have tried to show, it was fated to come already entangled problematically in liability, the liability of being uttered by the interested giver from without.

Must that then leave us with nothing other than Awoonor's rather grim conclusion, as cited in the epigraph above?

Not necessarily, although the epigraph is a sobering reminder that in the writing, the worlding, of the African nation liability is never far behind possibility. To think African modernity as possibility at all--and it is within this possibility that nation accompanies a middle class in the rising--we need first to recognize the imposed liability of worldlessness in which this possibility is inscribed as its own structural and semantic precondition. As it detaches itself from this precondition, in a heroic quest for its own possibilities, African modernity presents itself, as I have suggested in the previous chapter, in a manner not unlike Soyinka's reading of the Yoruba god-figure Ogun in the trammels of the "fourth stage" or the "abyss of transition." Here, in what might be called Ogunist paradox, the god-figure admits within a single frame both life-affirming possibility and death-dealing liability. If he is the creator-redeemer of what, until he exerts a questing, creative will, remains an uncreated world, Ogun also possesses impressive blind spots that make him an unthinking destroyer of the world of his own effort. And in destroying--i. e., compromising--what he has created, Ogun might be thought (in somewhat Sisyphean terms) to represent heroic creativity finding itself repeatedly subject to perdition, or as the will-to-become forever shadowed by the worldless, alienated condition of its beginnings.

I invoke this reformulation of Soyinka's Ogunist problematic of worlding Africa--and I have given it an interpretative twist that makes it partial to my own project of reading the modernist problematic of the African nation--to provide a partial analogy for the two error-prone, would-be heroic middle class types whose narratives provide the subjects of discussion in the next chapter. William Narh Ocansey and George Ekem Ferguson are the names of these two. Natives both of the Gold Coast, they did some of the earliest Anglophone writing to come out of the country at the beginning of the colonial era.

In Ocansey's African Trading (1881), as we shall see, he is the Kafkaesque naif almost, his story that of the native attempting, from the injustice of the colonial periphery, to beat a path to the unknown but thought to be righteous heart of Empire. The theme of the quest for economic justice at the centre of African Trading we would certainly recognize as an early statement of the recurrent crisis afflicting an Africa displaced into a colonialist and lately neo-colonialist modernity; if so one merit of Ocansey's story is that, however uncomfortable its resolution, it refamiliarizes us with the pursuit of equity in a forgotten era.

Ferguson's 1892-1897 narratives for their part describe the expeditions of a native Colonial servant into what was then the unincorporated Hinterland lying behind the Gold Coast Colony. The author hands us narrative descriptions of the series of scientific surveys and mappings he conducted of this "unknown" space. In relation to his "own" native territory, we see a Ferguson who gauges his mission generally in terms of what would be called, in today's language of post-imperial uniformity sponsored by the Bretton

Woods Institutions, "structural adjustment." If his narratives depict a black man in the role almost of a civilizational demiurge, Ferguson reads himself in this role as a bridge in the middle, a native auxilliary drawing on the pulse of an imperial modernity, and conducting its Immense vitality to rejuvenate and recreate the enfeebled heart of "barbarian" country.

Between naif and demiurge in the middle--both starting from, and attempting to negotiate, the created burden of uncreated Africa--I wish to draw a composite sketch of resolution and compromise as a theme which haunts that scene of becoming I have designated African modernity. To this end, as I read between the narratives of these two, I perform my own delicate negotiation in order to establish the gesture of writing--and reading--the nation as an activity that proceeds in spite of, as an attempt to construct possibility in the interstices of liability. Hence, in spite of the fact that Ferguson and Ocansey were error-prone, I can hardly claim to speak this from an Archimedean point of view. On the contrary, by rendering them as problematic studies in paradox, I wish to measure our contemporary dilemmas as Africans against, and show them as flowing from, theirs.

Thus in the next chapter, as I draw on narratives representing two facets of the native auxilliary, the outbound messenger (Ocansey) and his inbound counterpart (Ferguson)--archetypally representing what Ngugi, the Kenyan writer and critic, refers to as an African messenger class--it is to step back in time to configure a genealogy. And this will be a genealogy that self-consciously traces the paradoxes going into the making of African modernity, that problematic configuration in which the African nation is

entangled and out of which it strives to name its own possibility.

CHAPTER 3

GENEALOGY OF A "MESSENGER CLASS"; PARABLES OF OUR TIME

Narrating Uncreated Africa in a Colonialist Modernity

Tyger, tyger, burning bright
In the forest of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry
--William Blake

Let us help one another to find a way out of Darkest Africa. The impenetrable jungle around us is not darker than the dark primeval forest of the human mind uncultured. We must emerge from the savage backwoods and come into the open where nations are made.
--Rev. S. R. B. Attoh Ahuma, The Gold Coast Nation

[In 1977] I told [my third year English class at the University of Nairobi]..."I want to attempt a class analysis of Chinua Achebe's fiction from Things Fall Apart to Girls at War. I want...to trace the development of the messenger class from its inception as actual messengers, clerks, soldiers and road foremen in colonialism as seen in Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God, to their position as the educated 'been-tos' in No Longer at Ease; to their assumption and exercise of power in A Man of the People; to their plunging of the nation into intra-class civil war in Girls at War."
--Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Decolonizing the Mind (1986)

I. Sons and Fathers; Or, Locating the Present in the Future Anterior of the Past

Introducing the Picador collection of his first three novels recently (1988)--the collection goes by the title The African Trilogy--Chinua Achebe steps back for one

reflexive moment to make a candid observation about his relation to his father. Recalling that the man was "a devout evangelist," Achebe reveals a father whose wholehearted devotion to the brave new white dispensation, introduced by the colonial encounter, was matched by an iron resolution to make a clean break with his traditional Igbo-African past. As far as the novelist can recall, he "never divulged to me before he passed on" the "sensational masquerade dancing" that he did "before he renounced the devil and all his works." The devil and all his works: this vocabulary we would surely recognize as one whose inscription and meaning appear in the very order of colonialist diagnosis which, as we have seen in the last chapter, contrives to impose on Africa her burden of worldlessness.

Achebe, looking at this scene of fatherly alienation, is moved to acknowledge that there might be a "great story in [the] generation (his father's) that navigated the perilous crossroads [brought on by the colonial encounter]."[1] Yet, in spite of the positive acknowledgement, the novelist suggests that he might not after all be the person to write this story. Its ambivalent implications, it would seem, impinge too powerfully on his present to allow him to give this story the "objective," clearsighted treatment it deserves. As he surmises: "why rush into it and perhaps get things (if not yourself) tangled up?" A father's deliberate oversight in the past strikes a contemporary responsive chord, an equally deliberated oversight, in his son.

As we read the literal detail of a personal oversight in a father's relationship with his son, then, it is to watch the scene of biographical confession disposing itself into an

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[1] Chinua Achebe, The African Trilogy (London: Picador, 1988) xi.

allegory of trepidation and unresolved guilt. This is the overwhelming impression we get when, in a moment haunted by a necessary failure of creative nerve, the novelist writes:

> The major problem was this: my father's generation were the very people after all who, no matter how sympathetically one wished to look upon their predicament, did open the door to the white man. But could I, even in the faintest, most indirect, most delicate allusiveness, dare to suggest that he may have been something...of a...traitor?

Not surprisingly as he tries to account for his difficulty Achebe takes the soft option:

> [I] don't mean this [refusal to call my father a traitor] in a sentimental, soft-headed, filial-duty sense at all, but in relation to concrete things I knew about the man. So the only permissible interpretation had to be that I was not old enough, or simply did not know as much as I should have when it happened.[2]

Contrary to what seems to be a deep-seated wish of the novelist to avoid the allegorical interpretation, we perceive in his account two individuals whose relationship is written over by a heritage bigger than either and encompassing both of them. This heritage, originally conducted through the position occupied by the father once upon a time vis-a-vis the "white man," is that which is bequeathed to his similarly positioned son. Like father, like son: the original sin of the former, it appears, is condemned to perpetuate itself.

Ngugi, in the example of the epigraph above, gives us a clue as to why Achebe insists as he does on the "concrete things"; that is to say, on why the latter must manage a larger sense of existential unease by deflecting it into the merely literal detail of a sensuous relationship. To read Ngugi reading Achebe is to understand why the Akan have observed proverbially that anyone who insists on peering into the eyes of a corpse

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[2] Achebe, Trilogy x. Emphasis mine.

renders himself liable to the unnerving experience of seeing a ghost. Yet this is precisely what the Kenyan writer would commit us to doing; for, as appears in his understanding of Achebe's oeuvre, giving the past relation--the buried corpse of the self, so to speak--an allegorical reading, of the kind I have given the scenario of Achebe et pere, is to usefully read the present relation symptomatically. Such a procedure, it is to be understood, shifts interpretation away from a manifest relationship--Achebe's concrete things--such that it points to a latent or residual one: the "ghost" that, lying (obscured) behind those concretely manifest things, threatens to jeopardize and contradict their reassuring, "fleshly" meaning.[3]

Thus it is that reading symptomatically, Ngugi's allegorical presentation of Achebe's writings from Things Fall Apart to Girls at War permits us to link these works in one continuum of paradox, furnished by an African leader middle class whose colonially alienated beginnings leaves it the actively residual function--as opposed to what is otherwise superficially manifest--of an Other's messenger. The Kenyan writer's mode of reflexive reading, furthermore, obliges us with the radical implication that, as exemplified by Achebe's oeuvre, since the creativity of a messenger class terminates in

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[3] Symptomatic readings, we will recall, are based on the principle that texts, whether social or literary, cannot mean what they say (i.e., manifestly or overtly) and cannot say what they mean (i.e., latently or covertly). Textual and social meanings, then, are not fully present to themselves but are derived in the domain of the Other (rendered as Ideology and/or the Unconscious). It is the task of elaborating the content of this Other, "buried" or "ghostly" scene of meaning--and how, in a "live" manner, it distortingly interferes with and insinuates itself into a manifest content--that falls on the critic who reads symptomatically. For Ngugi, of course, it is the structure of the colonial relationship that produces this Other scene, the Unconscious that alienates an African middle class from a sovereign meaning ("message") of its own.

its self-consumption in war,[4] the beginnings of this creativity may be thought to be based on an, as it were, inaugural Faustian compact.[5]

Going by Ngugi's style of figuring of Achebe, then, is to see in the detail of the latter's biographical confession a sense of fatherly liability that impels forward a history that can only displace from a middle class a self-possessed sense of African belonging. Where the generation of the fathers--the originals, as it were--are responsible for "letting in the white man," beginnings shape themselves not in originary purity but in a situation of genealogical "miscegenation." Such a reading, in effect, throws the continuities that follow from those beginnings--i. e., the national(ist) progeny of the fathers--into relief as an astonishing chiaroscuro: the open door of fatherly liability means that the modernist project of would-be African attribution that comes in its aftermath takes shape in a continual quest to resolve black from white; to coax endogenous (African) authenticity out of an exogenous (European and colonialist) overlay, and so on. It is in these terms that, whether he wants to admit it fully or not, Achebe, seeking to contain his immediate past in a critical narrative frame, finds himself also, in a reflexive doubling, immediately

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[4] Achebe's "Girls at War"--this short story appears with others in a collection whose title goes by the same name--is set during the civil war that killed a million Nigerians in the late-1960s. It is by situating himself in the events behind this story that Ngugi finds in Achebe's novelistic oeuvre an occasion to read not so much a culmination as a falling apart. The African nation, in this reading, is not a positive coming to coherence but a failure, a falling apart that must reveal the blemished truth of a contemporary African middle class to itself: its "hidden" messenger status. For Ngugi this status makes this pseudo-nationalist class, as he sees it, a bearer of, and a secret sharer in, a message historically not of its own fashioning. This is a message, moreover, which this class is condemned to secrete neo-colonially even at a distance from, and in the absence of, the Source.

[5] The essence of the Faustian allegory, we will recall, is the alienation of (a) man's sovereign, if limited, creativity (rendered as his soul) to a greater (rendered as Mephistopheles, the devil) in whose comprehensive power --it covers the whole world--he hopes thereby to participate. (In Marlowe's Dr. Faustus, Faustus' compact with the devil is for short term gain). After acquiescing to the blandishments of the devil (the overreaching, ultimately self-destructive, principle), Faust's desire is thenceforth held captive by the former; and, in the long term, he must suffer the everlasting agony that, we must suppose, comes with the knowledge of having lost sovereign control over his human destiny.

containing himself in the fraught consequentiality of that past.

Looking forward to the present chapter at the end of the last one, I suggested that I was going to read the paradoxical genealogy of African modernity, and that this would be done in a style that would bring into view retrospect conceived on the prospect. Genealogy, in the simplest sense, is about who begat whom. There ought to be more to it, however, than this reductive account if we consider that genealogical reconstruction traces a dual movement: it preserves in one continuum the movement of past in present and present in past. In such reconstruction, that is, the past is brought forward and preserved as present memory, and present memory itself reaches back towards and into the past for an investment of its own future possibility. Past and present are thus inscribed in each other, and the genealogical exercise reads as an attempt to capture both in a continuum whose points it defines always as the creative or original moments of a future anterior.

What I meant at the end of Chapter 2, then, was an exercise of this nature: to configure in a mutual relation the present reading (itself in) the past, and the past reading the future that is our present; hence a past reading itself (its present, that is) as a future anterior. Beginning thus with a critical reading of one of the central icons of African originality in contemporary times doing a keenly present-minded reading of his relation to his fatherly past, I hope, in the investigation of the symptomatic presentness of the past in Achebe's present, to have kept part of this project in view. What now remains to be done is to complete the circle by reading the presentness of our present in the immediate past, that past which endows the future-oriented projects of African

modernity.

This mode of reading is justified if only because the subjects of this chapter, Ferguson and Ocansey--but, in an outstanding sense, the former--present a huge challenge as to what to make of the ambivalence, the fearful symmetry, that inscribes the relation between the concrete things--in our contemporary situation, we might think this concreteness in terms of palpable achievements in the projects of African modernity--and the residual element which, although it may not manifest itself immediately, nevertheless shadows and insinuates itself (as Ngugi reminds us) into the workings of the former.

As we shall see, while resolving the challenge of reading Ferguson may not vindicate Achebe reading his father, it cannot also be a question of, as it were, unproblematically choosing Ngugi over Achebe either. For, as should be obvious, Ngugi, the symptomatic reader of Achebe, cannot logically claim to occupy a pure space outside the one which he reads the latter as operating in. It is this logical difficulty that necessitates the ambivalent reading I bring to Ferguson. Having said that, I also have to admit that, for pragmatic reasons, it will become necessary to suppress this same difficulty when I come to Ocansey's African Trading, reserving, as in Ngugi's demonstration, a purely symptomatic reading for his narrative. Read this way the latter's agonized self-presentation furnishes what might be thought as the traumatic pre-text that paves the way for the at once reactive and proactively nativist nationalism of Casely Hayford to emerge. Following the unselfcritical African Trading, then, we arrive at Ethiopia Unbound as the earliest literary example of the self-critical reaction of an African middle class discovering, relative to its own native sphere of belonging, its

alienated messenger status.

Before we get to Ethiopia Unbound in the next chapter, however, in order to assist us to square the circle of past in present, present in past, we will have to revisit one of Hayford's important reflections concerning "The Future of West Africa" (1914). Structured around the theme of fatherly liability, the early nationalist's reflections find an uncanny echo in what Achebe will come to write about his relationship with his father in 1988. If Hayford in this essay finds himself grappling, like Achebe, with the problem of reading the fathers, the future anterior of his reading--as denoted by the title of the essay--also foresees the problem in terms of the Faustian compact of alienated creativity that Ngugi gestures at. Insofar as Hayford is compelled beforehand, as it were, to read his situation towards Achebe and, beyond that, towards Ngugi, it is because he had arrived at an awareness that he had inherited a dubious "burden of the double life." This is a reference to the oxymoronic selfhood (or subjectivity) that the ambivalent currents of a colonialist modernity had elected to shape for his kind. Thus, drawing on the ageless poetry of old testament prophetic utterance, Hayford is moved to indict the immediate past: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." Acknowledging this unpleasant truth, the early nationalist asks rhetorically "who shall deliver us from the body of this death?"[6] Hayford shows that not only are him and his kind saddled with a deathly heritage--we might translate this as a colonialist Unconscious--but that this is something they are powerless not to pass on.

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[6] Casely Hayford, The Truth About the West African Land Question (London: Frank Cass, 1971) 100. What Hayford refers to as "death"(-in-life), we might translate as the Unconscious. In section III of this chapter I deploy this Unconscious in a figure of Innocence.

Hayford's reflexive lament about grapes gone sour on the children goes particularly for a middle class whose European education had trapped it, so to speak, in implements of colonialist devising. To be sure, the situation in which "The Future of West Africa" was conceived, and the language in which it was composed--English--bear the fraught symbolism of fatal compromise. Written to be delivered within the walls of a colonial school by one of its prominent native products,[7] it is a presentation that, compelled to take a critical look at its own pre-history, "confesses" to a complicity--that its own premises depend, more or less, on the conveniences of a colonialist modernity. For Hayford, then, all who come after the fathers, that generation which "did open the door to the white man," are heirs of the terrible burden of fatherly liability. Forever threatening to go sour on their descendants, the acts by which the fathers partook of the grapes of Europe thus become the very notation, as it were, of original sin.

It is on the basis of this Hayfordian conception that the will of the sons to original creativity appears subject to a Faustian compact (the self-same "compact" from which Achebe, coming much later, would much rather avert his gaze). "No worse burden," Hayford concludes in his piece, "could be imposed by [European] civilization on African nationality..."[8] The early nationalist's lament shows a keen awareness of how the desire of a native African middle class, his kind, has been alienated into an Other's desire. If this desire originates in the burden of worldlessness imposed by the latter, then Hayford

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[7] In its original version, Hayford's essay was delivered on his behalf before a section of the youthful rising generation. His audience comprised students of a colonial institution in Lagos, Nigeria, an institution going by the suggestive name New High Class School.

[8] Hayford, Land Question 101.

registers this as the mode by which Europe, handing down the language and dictating the terms that structure the burden, holds "Africa" captive to its design.[9]

Reading in the future anterior of colonial time, Hayford dramatizes the impossible situation of his kind: he shows the dilemma of the alienated subjectivity that has arrived at knowledge of the ultimate sort about itself. Just as in the allegory of the Faustian soul, the early nationalist, pondering creative originality--or a would-be sovereign, self-impelling principle--from the standpoint of an African middle class, must confront the ultimate genealogical paradox. Middle class creativity finds itself, if not wholly mortgaged to the purposes of the far-ranging power of a Mephistophelean--i.e., colonizing--Other, then, at the very least, alienated into participating as a secret sharer in the structures put in place by this power.[10]

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[9] This is what I have tried to show in the second epigraph to the chapter. The point of the epigraph is that Attoh Ahuma, for all his rhetoric of self-consciousness and the nationalist exhortation to go back to the way of the fathers, experiences the imposed burden of the Nothingness of the past quite keenly. He is subject to this burden--again, what I refer to as the Unconscious--in a way that does not permit him to fully escape the language that savages and demonizes the culture of the pre-colonial fathers, the very fathers he idealizes elsewhere in The Gold Coast Nation. What we see in the circumstances is the voice of a desirous middle class which, seeking the original terms with which to world Africa anew, is compelled to speak--and this is the dilemma of doubling Hayford addresses in his lament--with a forked tongue.

[10] For a tragic rendering of the Faustian compact of the African middle class, see Cheik Hamidou Kane's allegorical novel Ambiguous Adventure (London: Heinemann, 1972). Kane powerfully dramatizes the theme of self-loss, doing so within the larger ambit of the major "upheaval in the natural order" grounding the cultural practices of African nativity that came after the colonial encounter. Resolving the encounter in an allegory of "the [black] man" and "the [white colonial] school," Kane proposes: "[W]ithout either of them wanting it, the new [black] man and the new [modern-colonial] school come together just the same...The man does not want the school because in order that he may live--that is, be free, feed and clothe himself--it imposes upon him the necessity of sitting henceforth, for the required period, upon its benches. No more does the school want the man because in order to survive--that is, extend itself and take roots where its necessity has landed it--it is obliged to take account of him" (50). What Kane renders here is a mode of retrospective paradox where "freedom" (possibility) is obliged to be inscribed in, and therefore impossibly wrest itself out of, colonial Necessity (liability) itself. In Ambiguous Adventure, Necessity possesses a sense of ultimacy: the tragic self-loss of the hero read in these terms translates the situation of Africa coming after the colonial encounter into the harsh Experience of unfreedom (or, lately, a post-colonial delusion of freedom). It is a liability that, so to speak, leaves African nativity robbed forever of the sovereign repose of its pristine Innocence (for Kane, an unidealized Innocence, equally rigorous and harsh).

Thus the paradox of modernity's colonialist African genealogy. It is to examine some of the implications of this paradox that I turn to the expeditionary narratives of Ekem Ferguson in the next section. If Ferguson provides the occasion to illustrate the problem of doubling (or ambivalence), then in the discussion of Ocansey's African Trading which follows, I permit myself to read out the colonialist Unconscious--or the secret original sin, if you will--of a modernist middle class. And reading the two figures I wish to sound not so much the pastness of the past as the future anterior that necessarily structures a problematic colonialist past within our present endeavours.

II. George Ekem Ferguson, Innocent Zealot or Glorious Fool?: Notes on a "Paradoxical Patriot."

As I turn to the expeditionary narratives of Ferguson, it is to shape a discussion of them in a way that makes them resonate within: a. Hayford's preoccupation in "The Future of West Africa" with thinking a way out of the impasse of a double consciousness; and b. what Achebe's retrospection, as we saw, has to admit by default. For the latter, the way out of the impasse would hardly seem to be one that required a closing of "the door"--as if this is possible at all--through which, in the first instance, the generation of the fathers had let in the modern and colonialist civilization of the "white man." Still, his evasiveness concerning the ultimate question of fatherly liability does indicate the unpalatable condition this moment imposes on the (genealogical) future, the present which is the originality of our future anterior. Thus his reservations can only

leave us the startling problem of what to make of an "African" consciousness that appears in a modality of doubling, that very ambivalence which Hayford had put his finger on a half-century or so earlier.

Inasmuch, therefore, as the inaugural act of the door's opening is irreversible, going back to read fatherly types like Ferguson poses a by no means easy challenge. To those who would read and write (about) the narratives that occupy the colonialist beginnings of modern African nationality, then, Achebe's hesitation before the ultimate admission of original sin (or fatherly liability) can only be an uncomfortable reminder that, in these narratives, it is by no means always possible to tell the collaborator from the resistor, the traitor from the true patriot.

Such, perhaps, is the meaning of the strange ambivalence we find in the description of Ferguson, the youthful technocrat and loyal native servant of Her Majesty's colonial government, given by Kwame Arhin, the Ghanaian Africanist historian. In Arhin's assessment (and the historian himself would belong to what I produce as an emergent middle class of Africans), Ferguson emerges as a clearly "extraordinary" personage, although the former is quick to add that "one may, in retrospect, disaprove of [Ferguson's] assiduous and devoted service to an alien (i.e., colonial) government..."[11] By any measure it is true that Ferguson was extraordinary. A public servant who gained part of his training by the route of a colonial scholarship, this native son--Ferguson was of Fanti extraction--impressively brought the combined roles of political agent, diplomat, surveyor, geologist, cartographer, draughtsman, explorer,

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[11] Kwame Arhin, ed., Introduction, The Papers of George Ekem Ferguson (Leiden and Cambridge, 1974) vii, xi.

historian, linguist and ethnographer to a, by all accounts, grateful colonial administration.[12] Nevertheless, Arhin cannot help but admit that, for all his "support for colonial rule," this was a native African who was "paradoxically patriotic" (PGE, xi).

What are we to make of Arhin's paradox of a patriot? What of a "patriotism" fated, as it would appear, to perform dual service: as much for a colonial regime, whose ends it furthered in the past, as for a present reaching back to look for an enabling archetype of national beginnings? These questions point still to another, and that is: in obedience to the genealogical logic described above, what value must the present invest in Ferguson's past if it is to retrieve this past for itself as its own possibility?

On the one hand, looking back, the "father" who gave an unquestioned dedication to Her Majesty's Government could be read in a positive sense as one who played the exemplary role of a pioneer, spearheading a process of modernization that today's Ghana pridefully inherits. On that score Ferguson is Arhin's "extraordinary" figure: to the extent that he shows himself able to traverse, chart and point a way ahead, a way out of and beyond the limitations revealed to nativity about itself by an all-conquering imperium, he represents a figure of utopian possibility for the present-day national formation. It is Ferguson's literal groundwork, after all, that made it possible to imagine the actualization of Atto Ahuma's nationalist desire for a post-ethnic Gold Coast/Ghana, complete with the "rights, privileges and status of nationality."

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[12] Born in 1864, Ferguson started work in the colonial civil service at seventeen. After taking a course of instruction in astronomical observation and map-making, he had by age twenty (1884) already compiled for the colonial government a map of the divisions of the Colony. The first of Ferguson's expeditions took place when he was twenty five, after his return from the Royal Normal School of Mines where he had studied surveying, among other things, between 1889-90. At age thirty two (January 1897), in the course of another expedition, Ferguson would meet an untimely death in what is today's Upper West Region of Ghana.

However, if, on the other hand, serving as the instrument of colonial power,[13] Ferguson appears to be guilty of furthering the territorial and cultural alienation of a hitherto self-accountable sphere of nativity into a colonialist modernity, then a problem arises. In this problematic mode, Ferguson presents a liability which we must factor into the African nation as a part of its modernist heritage. The question then is: is Ferguson, the man who more than any other native bestowed upon us the physical configuration of modern Ghana a glorious fool or an innocent zealot? A categorical interpretation of the man's career is snagged by the fact that today, if an African people know and live their existence daily as Ghanaian, their consciousness of an imagined community redounds in large part on the personage and work of Ferguson. And yet this technocrat's valuable work, work on which succeeding generations are compelled to place a national significance, was enabled by the conveniences of a European civilization he accepted and unqualifiedly revered as such, its colonialist implications notwithstanding.

Again, it would seem that to arrive at a comprehensive sense of African modernity at all, we are required to maintain a posture of reading between liability and possibility.

In the circumstances, our African situation is not unlike that captured in another Akan proverb, a conundrum which might be read as thematizing the dilemmas

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[13] On p. 129 of his Gold Coast Men of Affairs, Magnus Sampson writes: "There is enough evidence for saying that the Colonial Office to-day owes more to no African of the Colonial Civil Service whose name stands on its roll of fame, than to George Ekem Ferguson." Sampson's Ferguson is a "dutiful" man whose "daring and brilliant achievements commanded the attention not only of Colonial administrators and authorities at Colonial Office, but also the British and Foreign War Offices." This last point makes a lot of sense if we consider that Ferguson's expeditions derived their urgency in the context of the Scramble for Africa; in the intense struggle to acquire territory, before and after the Berlin conference of 1884-85, waged between the rival new imperialisms of Britain, Germany and France.

characteristic of the twilight zone of historical transitions. According to this piece of traditional wisdom, the nature of the santrofi bird is such that to take it from the wilds and bring it home with you is to impose a curse on yourself (and, it would seem, on generations to come); and yet a failure to claim and domesticate this bird is an unwise denial of yourself (and, by implication, your posterity) a great fortune.

We may substitute modernity's colonialist dispensation in Africa for the troubling otherness of the santrofi bird and, in that move, locate in the Akan proverb both a salutary imperative and an ominous warning. If the proverb resounds as the difficulty, in our situation, of telling regenerative potential (the promise of a rationalized modernity) from deathly liability (colonialist alienation), still, we may tease the implication from it that if the regenerative possibilities introduced by the strange element are to be realized, then this requires that domestic space be urgently re-oriented.

This is where Ferguson's expeditionary work yields us a mythos of beginnings. For he makes us see African agency transformatively working on its native Innenwelt--the inner world of nativity--in an active quest to productively align it with an outer world, that novel world so importunately bearing down on the old Africa. His accounts of his travels from coastal Gold Coast into an "unknown" interior posits the possibility, then, of reconciling an "inner" with an "outer" world. And this possibility is precisely what we observe in the extraordinary drive of the native surveyor who traverses, charts, maps, records and prognosticates on the domestic spaces of an indigenous nativity in hopeful preparation for their infusion by a rationalized (in the Weberian sense) and, in his own account, "civilizing" modernity.

Ferguson was sent by the Colonial Government on a series of expeditions into the Hinterland of the Gold Coast between 1890 and 1897. He recorded these journeys dutifully in accounts addressed to the Governor of the Colony and representative of the Crown. These accounts furnish us with a series of astounding travel narratives which frame meticulously prepared histories, ethnographies, and comparative cultural- and linguistic-anthropological data relating to the several peoples Ferguson encountered as he traversed the then Gold Coast proper and the Hinterland beyond. If Ferguson's accounts also provide sophisticated, historically engaged analyses of the contemporary political economies of these peoples, these analyses are accompanied by speculations on their potential utility in relation to the overall colonial political economy. Towards this end, the colonial servant provides an impressive cartographic and statistical survey and furnishes geographical and geological details and maps, among other vital items of information, about both Colony and Hinterland.

Ferguson's projections, in relation to what he saw as the fragmentary patchwork of weak ethnic enclaves in the interior, are inscribed in his expeditionary narratives as a vision of a sustainable post-ethnic world. If we get an obscure intimation of nationality--a uniform community, that is--in this post-ethnic world of his imaginings,[14] we must also

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[14] Such imaginings are reflected in Ferguson's speculations on the possible pre-ethnic linguistic unity of the Gold Coast and Hinterland: "When we reflect that a thousand years ago resemblances existed among the languages of Anglo-Saxon England, of Upper and Lower Germany and of Holland but that now, whatever radical affinity scientific dissection may reveal among English, German or Dutch, it is well known that a person speaking only one of these needs an interpreter for the other two, [then] it is not difficult to conceive that all the aborigines of the Colony and Hinterland are of one stock" (PGF, 126; emph. mine). If a greater Gold Coast is envisaged by Ferguson's work on the ground, these imaginings, in the mode of linguistic and ethnographic "science," amount to this groundwork's (ideological) justification. As we shall see in the next chapter, the "scientific" imaginary--articulated by Ferguson here--in which the middle sees a role for itself of bridging past perfect (one people before) and future perfect (one people to come) has a parallel with the culturalist principles and practice defined in a middle class nativist nationalism.

acknowledge the fact that Ferguson consistently saw its sustainability in terms of its being engulfed by a stabilizing British imperial-colonial power. This theme is of a piece with his measurements, classifications, diagnoses and prognoses. In them we might see the technics of science and instrumental reason objectifying themselves in colonial power; this power, then, being projected in advance, through the mediation of Ferguson, as the requisite normative principle that will homogenize and stabilize an otherwise "chaotic" native sphere.

Great believer in (Weberian) rationalization that he was, Ferguson's career must recall another, that one which saw Horton earlier advocating a rationalizing of the political condition--in reality the political economy--of the Gold Coast. However, unlike Horton whose writings, appearing before the inception of formal colonialism, are uncompromisingly sovereigntist, Ferguson, the servant-beneficiary of the new colonial dispensation does not, indeed cannot, give explicit expression to a politics of self-determination. This crucial difference notwithstanding, these two for being native men of science (Horton, we will recall, was a medical doctor) were not too far apart. The rational re-orientation of nativity that Horton committed himself to exploring in thoughtful action (if we can describe his reflections this way); that same re-arrangement which Ferguson will come later to commit himself to actually sketching on the ground, these commitments represent both to us as conduits of the same force: modernization.

What most identifies the two, then, is that they are middle class ideologues of the

same--a rationalized modernity.[15] If this is reflected in a certain unwavering pursuit of a principle of standardization found in their writings, in this "obsession" lies the common "political" ground occupied by the generality of their class. Here, on this ground of desire, we might think of a middle class projecting itself, in the name of science, as a standardizing or equalizing norm over the hotchpotch of more or less rivalrous ethnicities comprising a native African sphere.[16] With Ferguson as with Horton and others this idea of the middle as equalizing standard translated into more than a dream of a horizontal fraternity of native peoples, however. In its terms a middle class could also imagine itself in representatively modernist terms as the equalizing bridge between the native peoples and the exogenous sources of a "civilizing" modernity.[17] It is in respect of this that, as

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[15] Hence, for instance, we find Sarbah in the same mode advocating what he refers to as "scientific colonization" in his Fanti National Constitution. His compatriot Hayford, though, would argue on occasion against what he saw as a stifling "imperial uniformity"--that is, an overly bureaucratically rationalized Empire. Nevertheless, even he proclaims: "There is no reason why we, as Africans, should not also harness the discoveries of Science to our everyday need and make them productive of Wealth and prosperity within our borders." These comments appear in Hayford's Presidential address to the National Congress of British West Africa (his brainchild) in 1925. Cited in R. Emerson and M. Kilson, The Political Awakening of Africa (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1965) 50.

[16] Before Ferguson's own impressive analyses of the political economy of the Gold Coast (and its) Hinterland, Horton had written his pioneer Political Economy of British Western Africa (1865). In this work, to put the matter somewhat abstractly, we read an agile mind utilizing the idea of political economy to rope the discontinuities between the so-called West African countries of his later volume into a standard of uniform understanding. If Horton's effort translates these countries into measurable units in a relation of statistics, economic history and politics, the idea-concept that sustains their understanding as such, political economy, is itself part of the interlocking discourses of post-Enlightenment Europe investigating--and legitimating the transformations of--the foundations of society. Importantly, these are discourses whose "scientific" self-emplacement in relation to their object, society, name them not only as modern but promote also a prestigious ideology of the modern. Before Ferguson, then, Horton's thoughtful action thus already desires the infusion, if not the imposition, of the modern and its ideology across a pristine native sphere.

[17] Take, for instance, middle class father, Ajayi Crowther, Anglican Bishop of West Africa (and hence native linkman to modern Euro-Christian civilization), who argues in 1865: "Africa has neither knowledge nor skill to devise plans to bring out her vast resources for her own improvement; and for want of Christian enlightenment, cruelty and barbarity overspread the land to an incredible degree. Therefor [sic] to claim Africa for the Africans alone, is to claim for her the right of a continued ignorance to practice cruelty and acts of barbarity as her perpetual inheritance. For it is certain, unless help come from without, a nation can never rise much above its present state."

one of the first actuations of the modernist desire of a middle class to reorient ethnic discontinuity in the Gold Coast and its beyond, the groundwork of Ferguson finds a place in the anxious genealogy of this class. The drive, then as now, was to reshape nativity into a unitary entity that would thereafter recognize itself as a more or less standardized sphere of politically, if not culturally, shared values.

But what were these values for Ferguson and his "co-religionists" of the modern, and what system of valuation empowered and assigned them their validity?

In Ferguson's writings they fall under the Enlightenment and lately Eurocentrically defined themes of "civilization" and "progress," both terms clearly deriving their authorization from the power and prestige of Empire. Backed by this magisterial imperial guarantee, the colonial servant presents his relation to a native sphere in terms that permit us to read his role as that of an emissary of light bringing a dark and inchoate interior progressively into a measurable relation with a radiant centre. Hence, as we see him negotiating treaties of friendship and protection with the chiefdoms, states and polities of the Hinterland, Ferguson's instrumentality is invariably produced in an enlightened language of amelioration. The task of the colonial servant is to bring an "unknown" Hinterland into the ambit of the known: that which, by his account, is a "civilized" and "progressive" British colonial ambience. We can hardly fail to notice that in his self-descriptions in his reports, he belongs to a circumscribed world of "us," the world of the "civilized mind" represented by the Colonial Administration, to which he opposes "them," the "rude" world of "native minds" (PGF, 60, 129).

See Henry S. Wilson, ed. Origins of West African Nationalism (London: Macmillan, 1969) 150. See also Attoh Ahuma in the second epigraph above.

Within the problematic binary of "us" and "them," the centrality of imperial Anglo-Europe is insistently proclaimed by the dedicated messenger in passages where he ventures his "civilized" and "progressive" opinions. Thus, for instance, concerning the depredations visited by Ashanti on her neighbours, Ferguson notes ruefully: "It is a pity that, in these days of civilization, a savage and unreliable country like Ashanti should be recognised and respected as though it was one of the great Powers of Europe" (61).[18] With colonialist belittling of this kind going on, there is little to be surprised about in the following observation where Ferguson comments on colonial education and the language question:

> With regard to secular education, I am of the opinion that as long as the instruction...is confined to the native languages--languages which have no literature and no ulterior utility--there will be but little progress (PGE, 24; emph. mine).

Throughout the account of his travels, a language that identifies him with the "ulterior utility" of Europe--and nativity's lack of ulteriority here advances Europe's claim to be the outermost limit of the "universal"--fixes the native surveyor within the symbolic centrality of a European universe. And it is in relation to this assuredly secure universal symbol that, through Ferguson's instrumental mediation, the Gold Coast and its Hinterland are to be progressively surveyed, sketched, mapped and, finally, drawn into the political economy and geography of the universe of "civilized" nations.

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[18] Ferguson's belittling of Ashanti (or, properly, Asante) falls into place in the sustained threat this belligerent native people represented to British interests in the Gold Coast and the Hinterland. For long Ashanti, yet another (and easily the dominant) Akan sub-group, waged one of the strongest anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist campaigns against the British in West Africa. (Ashanti itself could once claim an empire that covered much of the then Gold Coast and as much again of the Hinterland that Ferguson would visit). Having imposed several setbacks on British ambitions in this part of Africa, Ashanti resistance was finally ruthlessly crushed by the former in the 1890s. The capital Kumasi was destroyed and the King of Ashanti exiled along with his generals to distant Seychelles.

Reading Ferguson in our paradoxical genealogy, it would seem then that to arrive at an awareness of itself (and its modern potential) at all a Gold Coast/Ghanaian nationality, sponsored by a middle class, had first to undergo the fatal compromise of seeing itself with and through the eyes of the colonial Other. The narratives of the native surveyor, cartographer and political agent provides a sustained account of this process. His own demise in the Hinterland in 1897, at the tender age of 32, in the service of his colonial masters, lends a symbolic dimension to this element of fatality.

Fatality notwithstanding, returning to the moment of the paradoxical patriot as a present self-consciously reaching for an enabling archetype of national beginnings means reminding ourselves of one thing: that it is in the nature of the idea of nationhood to achieve a transformation of fatality into continuity. For Anderson, whose observation this is, the imagined community of the nation proffers a mythopoeic solution to fatality in which time's liabilities, the orts and fragments of history, pass into a progressively meaningful genealogical narrative.[19] Thus, like any other, in the mythos of our own nation, we may turn the native servant's literal staking out of physical and political territory for a colonial dispensation into an obscure staking out in advance of imaginative territory for a unified native constituency. It is this constituency that, with time, would come, more or less, to imagine a singular selfhood within and in spite of the fatality both of colonial imposition and its own internal diversity.

As for Ferguson himself, when he quotes a European source, E. B. Tylor's Primitive Cultures, he appears to approve, with regard to the relations between colony

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[19] See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 18-19.

and native constituency, a language of fatality. Writes the colonial servant:

> With regard to progress "year by year the influence of traders and missionaries is breaking down the old native life and substituting European ways. This change is inevitable, indeed it exemplifies in an extreme form those movements in civilization which in every tribe has gone on from remote antiquity by neighbouring tribes bringing in new arts and improvements at home taking place by slow degrees." This is what Dr. Tylor says, and is true as representing the general progress of the people of the [Gold Coast] Protectorate (PGF, 23; emph. mine).

In this representative quotation and elsewhere, we observe a Ferguson who has succumbed to the fatalistic and unassailable logic--the expression is Achebe's--of borrowing and utilizing the cognitive tools, symbols and signs of a European "civilization" to "break down" and assimilate what this civilization represents to him as a "savage" and "barbarous" sphere of nativity.

Still, even though he feels himself operating within the same cultural ambience of a European and Europeanized "us," this "civilized" native enacts the beginnings of his project in an "eccentric" manner that, in Anderson's terms, we can turn to imaginative nationalist account, seeing in it the ghost of a possibility that he was working with a logic in view different from the colonial one. Far from an admission of fatality, therefore, we can rescue a sense of continuity-in-prospect from a Ferguson who demonstrates an intuition that, rather than serving a colonial end in an Anglo-European Empire at large, his project may stand at a beginning in relation to a nativity at large.

The evidence is in the revealing self-presentation in which the native cartographer gives an account of how, before he starts his journey, he orients himself in relation to Accra's James Fort (Accra was the capital of the Colony and is of present-day Ghana). In this first account, submitted to the Governor in 1892, James Fort might be a symbol

of the standard universal, the centrality of Anglo-Europe itself. Ferguson reports:

> For the purpose of my mission Your Excellency was pleased to cause to be issued to me...an 8 in. sextant, a false horizon, a 5 in. aneroid barometer for ascertaining heights, a pedometer and an Abney's level...your field glasses....Before my departure I made certain preliminary observations. The first was to determine the latitude of James Fort, Accra, so as to be able to compute the positions of places by "dead reckoning," should I be unable to fix them by celestial observations--a foresight which I had no cause to regret...

Ferguson grants the "foresight" to the Anglo-European structure; yet, within that prior structure, he introduces his own foresight, a self-serving foresight that modifies the original. Thus he is not to be understood in any simple fashion as one who cooperates with the structures defining an Anglo-European priority. On the contrary, working within those structures, he shows a remarkable display of competitive because adaptive initiative. When the borrowed tools he wields prove inadequate, the servant shows himself perfectly capable of using this adaptive initiative to reinvent their priority towards his own moment. Consider:

> Though for rapid military surveying [the false horizon] may be very serviceable, yet for fixing the positions of places, such as was suggested by Your Excellency, it proved unsatisfactory, and in the absence of a mercurial horizon I had to substitute for it Stephen's blue black ink used in a wooden trough. In sheltered positions (which I selected) I was satisfied with the results obtained.

And, could the native servant's tongue be in his cheek in this observation to his white colonial superior, where he appears to suggest that a singular definition of the universal (such as the standard European) might be in error?:

> Another circumstance connected with these preliminary observations was that I discovered for scientific purposes the eleven o'clock time signal at James Fort was not to be depended upon for finding the error of a watch or its rate. I do not know, however, whether it professes to do that (PGF,

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Going by the by no means simple figurations of self and role in his expeditionary accounts, we cannot but paradoxically heroize Ferguson for the reason that in the teeth of necessity he showed ample demonstration that he could hold his own; that he could literally and figuratively take on the world, determined and prospective, and do so, in however compromised a fashion, on his own premises.

It is in this adaptive posture towards (a colonialist) modernity--a modernity that Ferguson values for its techno-scientific and bureaucratic rationality, for its civilized order and its promise of a progressive amelioration of "backwardness"--that our paradoxical hero gives us a spirited performance of native initiative, initiative that anticipates by several years the denial in Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1902) that any such thing could come from Africa. The comparison with Conrad is called for if only because Ferguson's stewardship in relation to the implements of modernity that had been handed him, as given in his expeditionary accounts, nullifies the skeptical vision in the former's novel--itself part of a much larger Eurocentric prejudice that continues to this day--of an Africa capable of authoring and directing itself in modernity. In Conrad's novel, this prejudice appears in the portrayal of the fireman and the helmsman, the African fellow travellers with Marlow, the hero of Heart of Darkness, on his journey up the Congo.

Conrad's portrayal of his African figures is done in a mode of irony--in the author's reductive biologistic language the fireman is an "improved specimen," a "parody

of a dog in breeches."[20] Not only that: in what only renders him laughable, the vessel of modern European design the fireman finds himself on appears to be of an order of inscrutable witchery. As for the helmsman, being one who lacks both initiative and discipline, he cannot hope to control the boat without Marlow's (or European) supervision. Read as an emblem of the modern, the European vessel which has taken the two Africans on as fellow-travellers casts them into a journey that represents for both a sort of technological, managerial and existential cul-de-sac. Conrad's Africans, in short, are conceived in a composite of fatality.

That reading is confirmed when the author causes the helmsman to be killed by a spear pushed through his heart (of darkness) by one of his own "savage" kind. If this event rebounds on the "Dark Continent" as an image of a disabling atavism, it carries the presumption also that, since he is bereft of a capacious understanding, the "savage" at the helm of the European machine represents the reductio ad absurdum of the idea of an Africa able to initiate and actuate itself in a forward-driven modernity.

Rendering the modern as a genealogical cul-de-sac for Africa, Conrad's parodic account appears in the very colonial era that produced Ferguson. Inasmuch, however, as we wish to rescue from this same era not fatality but a sense of continuity-in-prospect, it is necessary to enlist and uphold Ferguson in a non-parodic reading of beginnings. Such a reading should challenge Conrad's dispiriting portrayal, taking back for Africa the modernity that he (and the ideology he represents) would deny us. It means, just as Arhin does in his assessment of the man's work, acknowledging the heroic, forward-

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[20] Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973) 52.

looking initiative of the paradoxical patriot. It means shaping possibility in the past--as, reading in spite of, I have tried to do--in a manner that enables the present of the imagined community of the nation to place itself positively in a relation of continuity with this past of adaptive initiative.

Still, to read the doubling of liability and possibility into each other that characterizes the paradoxical genealogy of African modernity means we cannot ignore the crassly utilitarian in Ferguson's thought. The enthusiasms with which he presents the ulterior utility of Europe in relation to a domestic nativity cannot always be justified. For instance, Arhin quotes him as writing:

> Now it is only by extending our influence northwards and introducing the luxuries of civilization to them that we can hope to create a necessity for our goods. Powder, guns, kola-nuts, rum, gin, brass and copper rods, flint, beads, will sell well. Cotton goods must be produced thick in texture, good in quality, and low in price, to replace native manufacture...

As Arhin observes, Ferguson was recommending a policy that would and did in time reduce the native to total dependence on Europe "even for tools and utensils" (PGE, xii). The native colonial servant is guilty of the original sin of envisioning his brave new world from the all-encompassing perspective of Anglo-European scientific and commercial imperialism. Within the terms of that vision, we find him judging the material culture and the symbolic securities of a native sphere and pronouncing them inferior on the whole to the European. In his projections, he foresees the substitution of these Old World securities by the new insurance of "civilization," which means the European.

A Ferguson in this mode, standing in a brave new world of triumphalist science,

commerce and progress sponsored by his imperial mentors, may envision his role as the spreading of Pax Britannica in terms that would create a confraternity of black and white, native African and European. However, to the extent that this vision also sought a progressive customizing of the native to acquiring "a taste for European goods," his dream of bridging a native sphere and the sources of a civilizing modernity was a colonialist one, seeking, in a mode of dystopian liability, to bind nativity over to a dependent relationship. If, therefore, Ferguson's work registers the utopian possibility of a trans-ethnic fraternity of a national people, it is also not altogether easy to tell this transformative work apart from his shadowing of this imagined community in terms that leave it beholden to the colonial imperatives of Britain. Conceived as a common market for British goods, the greater Gold Coast he envisions appears in a supplementary and dependent relation with the metropolis. And this is what is tellingly revealed, as we saw, in his apologetic citation of Tylor to the effect that "year by year the influence of traders and missionaries is breaking down the old native life and substituting European ways."

But could such substitution as Ferguson imagines be as benign as the passage he cites makes it sound, especially in the era in which he wrote? What, we might ask then, are the colonialist implications of civilizational substitution for a colonized nativity? For an adequate answer we need, it seems, a theory that works risk into the political economy of the unequal colonial encounter, a theory able to show how, in the era when Ferguson wrote, substitution entailed precisely how such risk was to be managed and contained. The dependent status presupposed for the native by the work of the colonial servant requires therefore to be read, in a mode of liability, towards what we might refer

to as substitutive risk. By this I mean simply to point to the manner in which a colonialist modernity bears into and onto nativity new conditionalities of risk; how this conspires to shape the colonized native into a docile vessel--a "substitute"--who as such conducts, in the distant setting of the periphery, the real commercial (and bodily) risk of Europe away from the latter onto his own person and onto a nativity at large. Substitutive risk--I shall demonstrate the mechanics of its working on the native psyche shortly below--remains the unthought element in Ferguson's unqualified veneration of a rationalizing--a modern, in the Weberian sense--European civilization.

Conceived on the genealogical prospect by the children, as it were, the retrospect on the archetypal father, Ferguson, reveals the ambivalent beginnings in which a would-be African modernity, the future anterior, inscribes its possibility. Only insofar as he has more or less endorsed his "own" Nothingness--as revealed by those comments that detach him from what he sees as an obsolescent and in itself useless nativity--is the momentum of his creativity revealed. As we saw in the paradox of the creator-destroyer Ogun, Ferguson's originality, therefore, has a blind side of compromise: it is shaped in an oversight. As such it is originality that is to be understood in terms of the parable of the fatherly sour grapes which, according to Hayford, imposes a deathly burden on the children--that is, the Unconscious of colonialist liability. To his own question as to who shall deliver his kind from the burden of this "death," Hayford foresees a middle class absolving itself from a participation in its own "death" only in the motions of original creativity. From traitorous liability, then, creativity, looking towards patriotic possibility,

foresees its own absolution. Thus Achebe, contemporary creator of the "African," seeks absolution for himself and/in his father; and thus Arhin, middle class heir of Ferguson, in designating the latter as a paradoxical patriot, appears to absolve him and a class heritage of fatherly original sin.

Yet, depending on how we read, on how we position ourselves in relation to, the heritage of the fathers, absolution must appear to a greater or lesser degree. We have seen how Ngugi, contra Achebe, inclines to the latter, and pronounces in no uncertain terms the guilt of a messenger middle class; how he sees the gesture of absolution faking an innocence in an inability to fully acknowledge a middle class unthought and its unspeakable, that domain in which the Unconscious operates. If so, what we need to shadow forth more fully is the unthought of middle class Innocence (which, as I have pointed out, is my figure of a colonialist Unconscious). And of the writings of the turn of the century none, perhaps, obliges us with a full account of the archetype of guilty Innocence--Innocence that complements the theme of substitutive risk--more than John Ocansey's African Trading. I turn to this travel narrative below.

III. The Political/Poetic Economy of False-True Security: Colonialist Symptoms in Ocansey's African Trading

> The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of [men's] material life process...
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> --K. Marx and F. Engels, The German Ideology

> But now our African markets are failed and the only business we can transact is commission business, because lot of Europeans firms has been established here who sell their goods invoicely and also give 10% commission to all buyers who buy from one

> pound upwards, so there is no profit at all in our works here when we order.
> --I. H. Caesar, Gold Coast Native Trader, to Edward Challinor and Company, 1889.

Written seven years after the promulgation of the Colony, John Ocansey's African Trading survives as the first full-length Gold Coast "been-to" travel narrative. In this work, we can observe, through the author's defective analyses of self and world, a key illustration of the consequences of Africa's emptying into a colonialist modernity. As Ocansey's self-presentation reveals, this liability, as we have described it, registers in a marked psycho-affective dependency, a condition referrable to nativity's loss of a self-accountable power as it fell under colonial subjection. To take one example of how this problem registers in African Trading: if Ocansey takes his existential measure within a community that he imagines as different--notice the "African" in the title African Trading--he nevertheless presents himself naively as one among a dependent population of "British subjects," and his home territory, Addah (Ada in today's Ghana), as a "British possession" (AT, 92). We only require to relate the "innocence" that presents itself in this substitutive mode to objective historical process to realize that there is nothing spontaneously natural about Ocansey's innocence. It is, as we shall see, an invented innocence: "Britannia ever, ever shall rule the waves" is writ large, if in disguised form, over African Trading.

Recent critiques of Empire in historical and cultural studies have revealed the ways in which nineteenth-century British mercantilism masked itself in an ideology of philanthropy, marching to the rallying cry of improving Africans and making them self-

sufficient through Christianity, commerce and civilization.[21] Such was the language of Buxton, of Livingstone, and many others whose work, performed either in or on behalf of Africa, straddled the grey zone between British imperialism and commercialism and Christian evangelism. Reading between the lines of Ocansey's narrative in African Trading, it is easy to demonstrate through it how the turn-of-the-century ideal of suffusing Africa with the supposedly mollifying influence of a Christian civilization could and did in fact play Africa false. African Trading, as indeed its mercantile title theme suggests, is thus read in this demonstration as a fragment within the larger narrative of the capitalization by Europe of the spaces on its periphery, of which the African coast formed a part. This is the narrative which went hand in hand with, but is usually represented as, the account of the global march of Christianity and Western civilization.

To acknowledge the linkage between the march of capital and the march of a Christian civilization means peering beneath the romantic rhetoric adorning the latter and acknowledging what counterfactual truth is disclosed there. We will see in this disclosure that the unequal power relations that favoured the creation of colonial dependencies like the Gold Coast were directly reproduced in commercial relations. As for these unequal relations, as we have seen elsewhere in this work, they had led to the progressive dislocation and weakening of African coastal polities and the maximizing of British control over them. From the status of "Protectorates," these territories would lapse into "Possessions" with the advent of full-blown colonialism.

This process of maximizing control--which is what direct colonial relations are

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[21] See, among others, Patrick Brantlinger, "Genealogy of the Myth of a Dark Continent," in Rule of Darkness (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1988) 173-197.

all about--can only point to an effort to minimize the risk to British commercial venture capital in the newly designated colonial "Possessions." In effect, with its material and symbolic supports of the gun, the school, the law, culture and ideology--also the instruments of modernization--the commercial power of Britain, having reached a stage of colonial expression, contrives to secure venture capital an advantageous hold over the Gold Coast as much as the so-called Dependencies, African and other, falling under its dominion.

This is the backdrop against which the narrative of African Trading unfolds. John Ocansey is the European-educated son of W. N. Ocansey, an unlettered African trader seeking a foothold in a commercial game controlled by and from the European metropole. The educated native son retells the story of his travels to and within England, giving us an account in which he is reproduced as being successfully interpellated in a dependent colonialist mode. Given his insistent self-characterization as one who is subjoined to a power greater than himself, it is not altogether surprising that his narrative is achieved by and large in a form and mood that is subjunctive. As such, it is a narrative that achieves an extraordinary effect of guilelessness. Ocansey observes without penetration; or, perhaps, it would be more appropriate to say that his observations are already accounted for by the circumambient Christian symbolism in which his thought operates and which substitutes for any penetration he might have of his own. Hence in metropolitan England he is the real innocent abroad, showing a childlike trust and reverence before the symbolic heights attained by English civilization, and doing so in an awed register that reveals the effects of a missionary upbringing that had inculcated

deeply in him habits of subservience.

In John Ocansey's fulsome praise, his father W. N. Ocansey has "natural qualifications [that] would lead people to say that he was a born merchant." And "though he can neither read nor write, he is so quick, shrewd, and sagacious that he can trade in any way in native fashion as well as any learned man" (AT, 5). However, by the time Ocansey's narrative opens his father's business had undergone a series of upheavals, not least among them the loss of a substantial sum he was forced to pledge to the colonial authorities on behalf of the people of Ada. A pall of insecurity hangs over Ocansey's narrative from the beginning which is fully realized as the Jobean trials of father and son, especially regarding their business dealings.

What occasions the son's trip to England, the trip of which the bulk of the narrative is about, is a breach of trust by one Hickson, an English trading partner of Messrs. W. N. Ocansey's. For the native trader, England is the distant unknown. Still, the force of circumstance has caused him to place "full confidence" in this Englishman, and to rely "on his word, and on his honesty as a white man" (AT, 17; emph. mine). In the event, this white man fraudulently misappropriates the substantial figure of nearly three thousand pounds belonging to Messrs. Ocansey. This was money meant for the purchase of a launch to facilitate and secure the firm's business on the Gold Coast. Hickson, when his own England-based business runs into trouble, is compelled to sacrifice the trust of the African. The object of the trip of John Ocansey, the educated native son, therefore, is to deliver the burden of an African father's grievance onto, and seek a redress for it in, the justice system of the all-powerful metropolis.

If there is trepidation as Ocansey embarks on his voyage, there is also hope that the coverage of the distance between the Gold Coast and England by the native son would end in a retrieval of a father's security pledge (which is also his children's patrimonial guarantee); that such a pledge is redeemable in an assumed universe of shared trust underpinned, from an innocent native perception, by the rationality of the ruling symbols of the "white man": his government, his schools, and so on, but his religion, especially. Hence, that the voyage takes place at all conduces us to see that the native trader trusts that the law of the metropolis, expressing this rationality, would be hospitable and sympathetic to his cause; that it might provide an infallible medium of security for native and metropolitan equally. For that to happen, however, it is the son in the middle, the son learned in the symbols of the white man, whose "bridging" role had come to be deemed indispensable.

Thus, we might read off African Trading the "prefiguration" of a new mode of securing nativity. What Ocansey's middle passage points to as a larger significance is nativity making a compact with its own, re-orienting itself towards a new centre, the educated middle, after being newly de-centred (and hence made insecure) by the "distantiating" impact made on it by the power of colonial Europe.

Yet, if these assumptions and intuitions accompany the messenger-son, finally, the native trader in fact fails to get the kind of justice he desires. In the resolution of the case, the English defendant gets off with a light prison sentence and the money of the African trader, for all the expense he incurs to recover it, is irretrievably lost. Behind and beyond fact, however, the wasted voyage of African Trading requires to be made to

carry a certain logic of interpretation: that of the native son who had been programmed to fail; of the African who, in himself betrayed and incapacitated by the symbols of Europe, finally represents an ironic failure to bridge and secure that distance which nativity expects of him. And how could this not be so when African Trading shows us a native son who has lost his own ground, his identity usurped by and into the mythologies rationalizing the white man's symbols--mythologies which, as we shall see, shape and speak (through) his innocence? Ocansey's innocence turns as much on a problem of imposed misprision (and hence a problem of self-knowledge) as on misplaced trust and hope; and to understand the objectivities behind this imposition we need to critically implicate African Trading in the larger mercantile and colonial framework to which it alludes. In this larger critical framework we will see the educated native posing a security risk to his own nativity.

Within the larger colonial framework, then, the parody of justice the native receives is hardly surprising. In a glancing fashion African Trading shows us how British mercantile interests had been guaranteed a relatively secure base of operations in the Gold Coast by the powerful presence of a colonial agency. In that sense Ocansey unwittingly gives us an aspect of the raison d'etre of colonialism itself which, as already observed, was to reduce the element of hazard and risk accompanying British venture capital in a peripheral African location. This reduction was possible only to the extent that risk and hazard could be successfully transferred to a subject people, directly through methods of coercion, and indirectly through a colonial pedagogy and its supporting media. We might say, in other words, that the success of the colonial venture was

predicated on the extent to which a subject people could come to substitute themselves, as literal and symbolic containers, for the colonizer's risk. This is the meaning of colonial dependency that Ferguson, obsessed overmuch with "civilization" and "progress," never considered. Turning to the opening pages of African Trading, however, is to get a crudely literal, but instructive, picture of how British power, as a colonial surrogate of mercantilism, worked directly to effect a transfer of risk to the native.

By 1875, as a consequence of Britain's proclamation of the Gold Coast Colony, Ocansey's home district, Ada, in the general loss of sovereignty by a native ethnosphere, had legally become Crown territory. In the early part of that year, as he reports it, the people of Ada were found guilty under colonial law of looting cargo from a ship belonging to a British firm, Messrs. F. A. Swanzy (this was a ship that had foundered and was going down anyway). They were ordered to repay Messrs. F. A. Swanzy "5,000 dollars" (AT, 8). To enforce this order the colonial government deployed its military apparatus in a show of force that left the King (sic) and people of Ada grovelling before the might of its authority. In the sequel to this historical confrontation, after the King and W. N. Ocansey had pledged their money to pay the "debt" on behalf of the natives of Ada and its environs, a great number of them subsequently abandoned their homesteads and fled in order to avoid paying the money back. What might this dispersal indicate? The authority of the King that once came with a native sphere's being internally self-accountable is severely attenuated: the greater fear of the native is of greater power.

It is not too much to assume that before their contact with the European, a native

African people like the Adas had a sense of self-sufficient power in the sense that their material and symbolic cultural forms could be relied on to make hazard relatively manageable in their own terms. Here, in Ocansey's brief account, we can see the threatening and possessive symbolism of an Other, whose power appears near-absolute and unmanageable. And for the native what the impinging power of this Other meant was a fairly radical transformation of his lived experience. If a modernity he experienced as colonialist reformed him as a "British subject," within the same procedure, he must be assumed to have experienced a compromising breach in the secure moorings of his nativity. A colonized nativity becomes insecurely de-centred in relation to the workings of a directly felt but still "distant," and hence unfathomable, metropolitan power.

Ocansey's self-presentation in African Trading show us how this "present-absent" temporal power of the colonial Other is transmogrified into a captivating poetry of "absent-presence." We see it occurring within an ideological transfer mechanism whereby the new rationality of substitutive risk imposed on the native is so managed as to effect a reproduction of his subjectivity as "British." It is "Christianity," with its grand poetic theme of the inscrutability of Divine overlordship, which performs this transfer in a colonial setting. In the putatively Christian language of submissiveness which Ocansey recites, we thus approach the colonialist, dependent modality of his innocence.

In African Trading, then, we must read colonial power as that which is displaced by a mechanism of transference into the language of reassurance that allows the native son to put himself through his self-abasing substitutions. And if these substitutions are reassuring, this is so to the extent that they guarantee him an imaginary stake in a

puissant Christian God. The implication throughout Ocansey's narrative is that if a self-determining power eludes him in a this-worldly dispensation, this sense of worldly loss is reconcilable with the unfathomable workings of a divine will, a will to which it is his Christian duty to submit. Ocansey recites a Christian hymn--and his writing is characterized by fairly extensive recitations in this mode--that is instructive in this regard:

> The past no longer is in my power,
> The future who shall live to see?
> Mine only is the present hour,
> Lent to be all laid out for Thee.
> Now, Saviour, with Thy grace endowed,
> Now let me serve and please my God.
>
> Why should I ask the future load
> To aggravate my present care;
> Strong in the grace to-day bestowed,
> The evil of to-day I bear...(AT, 7).

There is more going on here--and elsewhere in African Trading--than an innocent protestation of faith by the son of the African merchant. We might seize this native son, for whom the past is forfeit and the future uncertain, as an emblem of the de-centred ontology afflicting nativity, but more keenly its educated portion. What his rote recitation reveals, however, is that this de-centering is already taken care of pedagogically, through a mnemonics of substitution. Recitation, that is, functions as a validating mechanism: its mnemonics act in advance to "resolve" a problematic consciousness of insecurity (what I have called the burden of worldlessness elsewhere) in the native son. And it does so by permitting a projective displacement of the colonially "emptied" native self, leaving its place to be taken by the supposed plenitude or fullness of an all-powerful

dispensation.

What Ocansey's account shows, then, is the magical working of a colonial affect. This affect subjects the native to explanations that magnify temporal power and renders a mystified account of its workings. This mystified power, in proportion as its authority usurps and exerts control over past and future, "distances" Ocansey's hold over his subjective present. In that respect, it fashions for him a subjectivity that knows itself as completely dependent, at a distant Other's mercy and living by his gracious power.

In keeping with our theme of colonialism as an administrative and symbolic management of risk and hazard, therefore, Ocansey's pieties may be read as the affects of a native subjectivity reformed by a pseudo-Christian education to function as a substitute for the exported risk of distant Europe. The language of Christian humility and duty taught to the insecure son of the African trader--a merest cog in a mercantile machine whose controls are in distant Europe--reads as an efficacious exercise in symbolic management. By rendering nearly invisible the objective reality of the ugly Darwinian struggle going on in a process of British capital accumulation (as recorded in a native trader's complaint in the second epigraph) it papers that struggle over and transforms it, in the exercise of faith, into nativity's "free" acquiescence in its own domination. When we come to Casely Hayford's unillusioned account of colonial power and "Christian civilization" in the next chapter, we will see that he understood this dimension of the colonial project only too well.

If Ocansey's account first shows us a transformation of the visible hand of colonial power into a dependable "God," as we read between the lines we might see this

"God" also as incarnating the invisible hand of metropolitan capital. The "word of God" and the imperative of Mammon are hardly distinguishable in this formulation by the author:

> Oh! that [Africans] would consider and be wise, and rise up like the prodigal son, and say, "I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven..." And God will in no wise cast us out; but He will instead of servants, make us his dear children. I have had conversations with many intelligent, high-minded Christian people in England, and they all say that the improvement of the white man is derived from nothing but the word of God. Africa, I hope, will not cast away this most sacred, precious Word, which is now being preached among them in very many places by white men...Oh! may the knowledge of the Lord spread over Africa as the waters cover the great deep! Then shall Africa find out her great wealth and riches,--then will the earth yield her increase, and God, even our God, shall bless us (AT, 37).

The repleteness of the white man's world makes him "Foremost of the sons of light!/Nearest the Eternal Throne" (AT, 41). Ocansey's Africa, by contrast, is bereft of light, a "great deep," whose vacuity needs to be filled with the light of a Euro-Christian God under whose dispensation "poor Africans...may also enjoy the benefits, advantages, and pleasures of knowledge and civilization!" (AT, 36-37).

Godhead makes itself manifest through the manifold splendors of a rich and replete Europe: Ocansey's England is captured in a register of wonderment in an account that juxtaposes church and Cathedral, the symbols of European technological advancement and the spectacle of British imperial might indifferently as objects of religious awe and veneration. St. Paul's Cathedral and the railway train; the sight of Cleopatra's Needle and the spectacle of a pyrotechnic enactment of the imperial Battle of Navarrino, designed to show off the "Commerce and Naval Power of Britain" (AT, 49); all these excite in our innocent abroad feelings of "astonishment" and wonder.

Having covered the distance from the Gold Coast to England, the mighty unknown, Ocansey, in terms of the substitutions that the colonialist apparatus of a Christian education has taught him, is enjoined to faithfully reproduce his colonized ("British") subjectivity.

Yet, inasmuch as he appears to show a wondrous fidelity to everything English in African Trading, perhaps a reading of the narrative of the native son is incomplete that does not see, however dimly, the chiaroscuro effect of light playing on shadow, and shadow playing on light, that ambivalence of the middle we identified earlier in the chapter. In that paradoxical respect, it too is an anticipation, however obscure, of the projects of cultural attribution that would go into the nationalist thematic of African modernity. To take, first, the native son's song of innocence:

> Not many years back, and but few Africans came to Europe...But now native traders and their sons...come on their own business; and the kindness shown to them is so great that they are filled with pleasure and gratitude. They are taken to see anything that is useful or profitable, and they are improved and not spoiled. When they return...they have very much to say, and are listened to with respect and confidence. Then their people are proud and pleased that the English have respected them; and they are far more ready to accept English ways and customs. And thus little by little, Africa will be changed as England was changed; for she too has come out of the darkness into God's marvellous light (AT, 37-38).

Ultimately, however, this is an arrested song of innocence. For an Ocansey lost in the attempt at finding a secure grounding in imperial power's distantiated omnipotence, a return home is shadowed as the possibility of a different mode of empowered belonging. The desire for homecoming anticipates obscurely a mode of self-ownership: home reads as the location where one is empowered to belong in a world of one's own, not to an Other's as his dependent. Here, then, is the native son giving us a balance sheet

summation at the end of his account:

> And now I felt my business in England was done. I should have seen all its wonders with different eyes and sensations if it had not been for this agitating, disturbing business...
>
> My mind dwelt very much on my home and friends...my mind wandered away to my own dear home, and I remembered all our people come down on the beach, waving their handkerchiefs and bidding me adieu; and I prayed that the good Lord would preserve me in health and strength, that I might return safely and give them the pleasure of welcoming me back amongst them (AT, 87; emph. mine).

Thoughts of homecoming notwithstanding, Ocansey's final word is still given in an idealized Christian language. This language shows itself only too ready to elide the imperatives of resistance that European colonialism had conspired to impose on the particular affiliations and identities it had (in part) created to serve its dominion.[22] Turning the other cheek, so to speak, he speaks instead a language of universal brotherhood that anticipates a magical egalitarianism beyond earthly inequality:

> Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
> Though sundered far, by faith we meet
> Around one common mercy seat (AT, 88).

Such persistent otherworldly rhetoric, it goes without saying, only leaves an innocent Ocansey in an ungrounded universalism--it leaves him, that is, beholden to a non-competitive idea of the universal, not so much his own as it is held ideologically captive in the competitive white European mythology of worlding.

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[22] Thus, for instance, our innocent abroad recounts--and chooses to be taught to forget--a moment on the streets of London when he is taunted by some English boys reminding him of his racial affiliation: "blacky, can't you wash your face...and make it white?" To this racist insult--which carries the whole history of Empire and its logic of white supremacy behind it--he defers a response to his English companion who "kindly said, 'You must not take any notice of them, because they do not know any better'" (AT, 42). Compared to Fanon's reaction, in a similar moment recounted in his Black Skin, White Masks where a white child points at him and says "Mama, a Negro!," Ocansey's silence is deafening. See Black Skin, White Masks (New York: Grove and Weidenfeld, 1967) 111 ff.

In the circumstances, he is not unlike Blake's innocent child persona in the poem "The Little Black Boy." We will recall that in this poem the little black boy foresees a future in which, the clearly disabling tag of his blackness abolished, he is resolved into a communal brotherhood of white, angelic souls. The projection is that in shedding his black identity--which, in the course of the history of Empire, has become an existential burden displacing him into the deprivation of earthly Nothingness--the black boy will then become like "the English child": he will be coopted as such into full participation (i.e., on equal terms) in the white universality whose fantastic representation is, and in which symbolically reposes, God's sovereign dispensation. We need only to run this poetic fantasy by our first epigraph to realize its foundations in the imperial-colonial political economy. And inasmuch as Marx and Engels are right, and "phantoms" have a basis in a material existence, the narrative of African Trading can only read as the enactments of a native psyche overwritten by an entrancing poetry, poetry whose beauty traps it in a false consciousness of colonial materiality. Little wonder, then, that, after Ocansey, the theme of (authentic) self-consciousness will come centre-stage in Gold Coast nationalist writing.

I have sought in this chapter, by way of the central examples of early narrative self-presentations by two middle class Africans, to sketch the paradoxical beginnings and continuities of a genealogy. In this exercise, I have sought to erect a knowledge of the middle class problematic of African modernity as, precisely, problematic. To this end, I have tried to illustrate with my archetypes, Ferguson and Ocansey, the more or less

insidious ways in which a colonialist modernity impinges on and reforms a native African consciousness. Both figures show how this consciousness, having responded to the pull of the Other of European civilizational modernity, is pressured towards a reconstitution of its physical and mental life-world.

In just such terms I have tried to draw out the ambivalent resonances of the ideological baggage carried by Ferguson. On the one hand, we find a native "salutarily" defined in, and marching to the tune of, an ideology whose implications are rationalist, evolutionist and progressively ameliorative. Yet the unexamined Eurocentrism of this ideology means that we see the mission of this same native as a colonizing one, this to the extent that it involves him in plotting and realigning nativity along the merely supplementary lines of Anglo-European modernity. The implications, as we saw, turning to African Trading, were that the brave new world imagined by Ferguson could be only insofar as nativity was denied any originality of its own. In Ocansey, we see the native reformed into representing an existent "past" to itself as a backward and spent force. Ocansey--and many others before and after him[23]--reveals how this could and did leave the educated native, newly produced at the problematic confluence of the colonial and the modern, at the mercy of an exorbitant power. It is an Ocansey caught at this bewildering juncture, therefore, who is compelled to re-turn to examine the eventuality of going back home at the end of his narrative. Finally recalled to himself, he effectively

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[23] Before Ocansey, what we might call a syndrome of resignation to fatality--as it appears in the native son's "The past no longer is in my power," etc., etc.--registers, for instance, in the careers of two middle class prototypes and Gold Coast natives, Jacobus Capitein (1717-1747) and Philip Quaque. On Capitein, see W. E. Abraham, The Mind of Africa (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1962) 124-125; and on Quaque, F. L. Bartels, "Philip Quaque, 1741-1816" Transactions of the Gold Coast and Togoland Historical Society 1.4 (1955): 153-177.

unconceals, in nativity, the latent reality of another pull, the affective pull of a sphere of "natural" African belonging.

An innocent Ocansey in this mode of emergent awareness, however, could not but foresee an organically defined home only dimly. If, in his circumstances, he had perforce to fail to demonstrate a farreaching vision of a native home, the reality is that, within the same period that African Trading appeared, an intellectually sophisticated group of middle class Africans had emerged that was prepared, as we saw in Chapter 1, to project a nativized Africa as a force in potentia. Whether it is the pioneering diasporic Blyden in Liberia or those who came after him in the Gold Coast--the most prominent of them Casely Hayford--this was an awakened group demonstrating in thought, in writing, and in deed that it was intellectually and politically capable of transforming an African cultural ethnosphere into a nativity resurgent. In the work of these gifted young Turks, therefore, we encounter another, a more positive, knowledge of beginnings. And by beginnings should be understood a project seeking to press a colonially emptied nativity into service as a secure foundation of (self-)knowledge, this on the very competitive ground--the "universal"--which Ocansey, trapped in an imposed innocence, had been forced to abdicate to a white godhead. In a word, in these beginnings we find, even within the problematic configuration of a colonialist modernity, the inauguration of a middle class passage from Innocence to Experience.

As we pass over from African Trading to Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound in the next chapter, therefore, it is to attend to the matter of middle class going through the motions of shedding its guilty (because complicitous) Innocence. If the question of finding and

securing a grounding in nativity is an outstanding preoccupation in Ethiopia Unbound, it is one, moreover, that is able to sound the first strident notes of an anti-colonial nationalism. Exploring the potential of nativity through what passed for the protocols of universality in his time,[24] Hayford will sound the possibility of giving a worldly (i.e., competitive) grounding to the very blackness which Ocansey, drugged by the power-laden symbolism of Europe, forfeits in his unselfconsciousness. Where the latter defers the tutelary guidance of a dependent and subservient nativity to Europe, it is left to the former to remonstrate with anti-colonialist conviction:

> The African...has need to unlearn a good deal. But the unfortunate part of it is that the way out is as yet dimly dawning upon such as would otherwise be qualified to lead the masses.

If, therefore, "it thus becomes the sacred duty of those who can see a little more clearly ahead to point the way,"[25] then, as we turn to Ethiopia Unbound in the next chapter, it is to see a representative middle class work that fulfills the pledge to begin this exercise in re-orientation and path-finding, this project of cultural-nationalist map-making.

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[24] Highlighting their competitive value, I have explored some of these culturalist protocols as they find articulation in the universalist philosophy of history and culture dominant in Hayford's time: the idealist Geistesgeshichte. See Chapter 1.

[25] J. E. Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (London: Phillips, 1911) 183.

CHAPTER 4

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

The Philosopher Who Would Be King: Power and a Usable Past in J. E. Casely Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound

> It is a grand thing when a people recognises that it has a heritage of ancestral rights; when it feels the past is not a nameless, shameful shadow, and realises that its forefathers have in the long, long years evolved a system of customs and usages which are trustworthy, practicable, and expedient in the economy and policy of the present...Tribes and factions can only be transformed into a nation from within.
>
> --Rev. S. J. Gibson, Acting Principal of Mfantsipim School, Cape Coast (1913)[1]

I. "Ethiopia" in a Will to Be and a Will to Know: Negotiating the First Steps Towards an Activist African Episteme

> So it is not I who make my own meaning but it is the meaning that was there waiting for me.
>
> --Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks

If we closed the last chapter with Casely Hayford's remonstration against the inauthenticity of the (educated) African, it was to anticipate a central concern of his Ethiopia Unbound--and hence of this chapter. In the early nationalist's charge to the

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[1] Rev. Gibson was proposing the toast at the Aborigines' Rights Protection Society banquet for Hugh Clifford, Governor of the Gold Coast Colony, in 1913. See Appendix B of Casely Hayford's The Truth About the West African Land Question (London: Frank Cass, 1971).

native African to learn to unlearn a good deal of what he has learnt he identifies a peculiar problem that had come up in his time: that of the native trapped in a colonialist education, an education systematically designed to leave him uncentred in a purposive knowledge of and toward himself.

As urgent as Hayford's reformist charge was when he made it, it was hardly new. Indeed, it can be indexed back to another made earlier by E. W. Blyden, Hayford's acknowledged mentor, and the man who had popularized "Ethiopia" in African nationalist discourse as an ideal of an all-embracing African (or pan-Africanist) endeavour. In an essay titled "Christianity and the Negro"--a theme as appropriate to African Trading behind us as it is central in Ethiopia Unbound--the doyen of African nationalism observes of the American Negro:

> From the lessons he every day receives, the Negro unconsciously imbibes the conviction that to be a great man he must be like the white man. He is not brought up...to be the...equal...of the white man, but his imitator, his ape, his parasite. To be himself...is to be nothing--less, worse than nothing...[2]

Here and elsewhere in his extensive writings, we find Blyden reflecting on the Negro's predicament as a comparative non-entity--comparative in the sense that he is (worth) Nothing, and is compelled to desire his Nothingness, only in the value system of the white man. We find the pioneer nationalist thus broaching the question of the alternative in which the black person might come authentically to found (or know) and correspondingly find the worth of his racial and cultural being. Embarked on a quest for this foundational principle at the turn of the century, Blyden's writings also register,

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[2] E. W. Blyden, "Christianity and the Negro Race," in Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1967) 37.

perhaps, the first far-ranging existential analysis of the "black skin, white masks" syndrome. And this, as we will recall, is the syndrome of the enslaved and colonized black psyche so-named in the middle of our century by Fanon.

As for the links between Fanon and Blyden, they are more than incidental: to turn to the one or the other is to see two New World Africans[3] who felt themselves able to engage in a committed search for an adequate hermeneutic--a foundational constant, that is--that would be the bedrock of a comprehensive system of racial self-knowledge. In other words, this search foresees an episteme out of which a practical philosophy of racial blackness--practical for lending itself to activism--might emerge. The commitment towards this is presupposed by Fanon's negative insight, reproduced in the epigraph above. In it he laments the unknowing racial self which may not invent purposes that are authentically its own since its self-knowledge is emptied into and held captive in another's meaning system. To the extent that Blyden, gauging the intrinsic worthlessness of the black person, had already anticipated Fanon, his own commitment to an Ethiopianist project of reclaimed authenticity registers a century or so earlier in the negative conclusion to the citation above. "Every intelligent Negro," Blyden writes (and 'intelligent' is another way of saying 'self-conscious'), "must feel he walks upon the face of God's earth a physical and moral incongruity."[4]

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[3] Originally from the Danish West Indies, Blyden had relocated in the Old World--in West Africa, to be precise --and taken on Liberian citizenship. His Ethiopianism is founded in a keen desire to bridge the two worlds--Old/native/partially Islamized and New/western/Christianized--in and between which the Negro found himself. Fanon, the theorist of African decolonization, was of course from Martinique. (My use of "Negro" is in keeping with Blyden's usage. It is the term available to him in his time. But it is also a reflection of his times that although in his writings he consistently capitalized the "n" in Negro, his white publishers in the West insisted on reducing it to the lower case).

[4] Blyden, Negro Race 37.

What does this moral incongruity come to mean for the "intelligent Negro" of West Africa, the intellectuals of Casely Hayford's and Attoh Ahumah's ilk who follow in Blyden's footsteps? To turn to the latter's disciples in the West African setting is to see them making the spectacle of existential horror he conjures--the black person programmed into a self-confirmation of his Nothingness--comparable to their own predicament.[5] Forced to confront the fact that the educated natives making up a colonial African middle class had for the most part no knowledge of self and purposes, these were native intellectuals who found themselves with the challenge of seeking out a hermeneutic of self-representation. And the hermeneutic so described should be thought as a principle imagined as at once foundational--i.e., original--and teleological--i.e., goal-driven; a principle, therefore, with and upon which to fashion a self, an identity, and a systematic knowledge of its purposes.

If a hermeneutic of self-representation was deemed vital, two trends suggest themselves in this emergency. And both appear in the related demands imposed upon an African class-for-the-world and class-for-power. As Blyden's work especially shows (and this is the task he imparts to his followers), it was necessary foremost for a class-for-the-world to fashion an order of African self-knowledge in order to confront the formidable discursive power of Europe. As we have seen, this was a power that had systematically immured Africa and the African personality--or the "Ethiopian" racial self--in Nothingness. Additionally, as the writings of a Gold Coast class-for-power show, a hermeneutic was equally crucial for a politics of representation. It was the absolute

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[5] See, for instance, Attoh Ahuma's essay, "The White Man and His West African Understudy," in The Gold Coast Nation (London: Frank Cass, 1971) 37-42.

guarantee needed to confront the governmental power wielded by colonial authority. This was a power whose machinations, defining the educated native as not native enough (and not European enough, for that matter), had definitively shut him out of the processes of political representation in the Colony.

Thus it is that, in the work of these early Gold Coast nationalists, from out of the colonialist precondition of discursive and experiential, metaphoric and literal Nothingness, we find the middle class self striving to take on a representative nationalist quantity (a political "people") and culturalist quality (a nativist value)--these as the self is enlisted in the search for a stable reference point, in relation to which to orient goal-driven purposes of a self-serving kind. Altogether, these are the considerations that provide the crux of the foundational (and teleological) question for the Gold Coast nationalist intellectual. And in this chapter, if this nationalist intellectual appears centrally in the figure of Casely Hayford, it is because his Ethiopia Unbound, cast in the multiple format of a quasi-fictional intellectual autobiography, yields the most searching, many-sided inquiry of all into the hermeneutic and representational question in the writings of the early phase of Old World African nationalism. In its many-sidedness, this work links perspectives in a literary culture (or literature), a philosophy of culture, and a moral culture of the self in relation to society and politics (what I have referred to previously as a characterology).

Hayford aside, the twin challenge of foundationalism and representative self-fashioning also feature quite prominently in The Gold Coast Nation, the collection of essays by his fellow nationalist traveller, Rev. Attoh Ahuma. If only in a purely formal

sense, Attoh Ahuma's writings may be made, as I do here, to serve as a prelude to Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound; and this is only if we are prepared to see the latter as providing a more systematic intellectual framework for the similar ideas and ideologies that resound between the writings of either nationalist. Prominent among these ideas are self- and national consciousness. And in the writings of the early nationalist intellectuals we find these ideas looking for an anchor in a moral referent. As it is, this referent comes to be posited in a nationalist ideology of consciousness.

For and toward nationalist purposes, then, this ideology--we may describe its deepest intuitions in terms of a radical quasi-existentialist phenomenology[6]--posits consciousness, on the one hand, as nothing less than intrinsically, irreducibly, original--that is, as a foundational power, in itself. On the other hand, flowing from its originality, consciousness is posited as radically originating--that is, for itself, a founding power. What the latter signifies is that, in relation to what is outside itself, consciousness is that which is able to induct itself into an "out there" and vice versa. This is consciousness, therefore, thought as project-making, its projects endowing its inner creative logic--i.e., its originality in itself--with representative status in the objective world "out there." And this is exactly as is proposed in the early nationalist project, conceived in a reformist spirit, of representative self-fashioning. We will see, in the third section of this chapter,

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[6] The "phenomenological" element registers in the nationalists' conviction that authentic (self-)consciousness is that which posits (or "intends," as a phenomenologist might say) its objects. I have tried to capture something of this meaning in the designation "worlding," which I resolve as consciousness stamping its authority on an object-world "out there" such that the latter's reference is thenceforth to this intending or positing consciousness. A moral philosophy calling for the exertion of a will to power, phenomenology undergirds the idea of the self, collective and individual, as intrinsically world-creating--of a consciousness that, as such, is radically foundational (i. e., original).

how such a formulation gives the allegorical basis of a Hayfordian nationalist characterology.

If, as I have pointed out, the writings of Attoh Ahuma may be seen, for the purposes of this chapter, as a prelude to Hayford's, to turn to these writings is to see the allegorical-characterological element beginning to find a formulation. With the passion of a preacher, Attoh Ahuma puts the question of self-consciousness--the founding of a foundational and founding self, that is--in terms of a moral cultivation of an original and an originating will in his essays. In its terms, he goes on to spell out the moral foundations of the (Gold Coast) nation in a refashioned self--the self of patriotic duty, of civic obligation and responsibility, of heroic sacrifice, and so on. But this is only so that the early nationalist can take a middle class to task in these very terms for lacking the nation-making requisite of originality. This lack is there because, as he points out in "The Difficult Art of Thinking Nationally," the middle class self is merely "tailor made," more or less the artificial construction of a colonialist modernity. Hence, in itself the class being was (worth) "nothing," and "tailor made men," men as such worth nothing, "did not constitute a State" (GCN, 10).

For Attoh Ahuma, reading the objective mode of his class existence in terms of colonial bastardy, the middle class being represented anything but authentic being. If, as he points out: "Origination cannot be predicated of us as a rule," then in this sense being in the middle was being for and towards nothing; it was to occupy the condition of "Imitators, not Initiators--Apes, not Men" (GCN, 7). Authentic being, then, could only come from a middle class ready to choose and project its being for and towards

something--those purposes and ends represented in the ideal projects of nationalism. If, as he exhorts, "We may be our own Architects" (GCN, 10), he foresees therein a class being able to will itself into self-consciousness and mustering the force therein to "create something out of nothing...[and to] execute that which never existed before" (GCN, 7).

These points are further clarified in the hortatory titles and content of two other essays in The Gold Coast Nation: "I am, I can"; "I ought, I will,"[7] essays addressing a need for the "I," the (self-)consciousness in the middle, to assert a radically original creative will. Inasmuch as Attoh Ahuma's thundering "I am" is a nominative; inasmuch as it makes the "I" irreducibly original, what follows the auxiliaries "can," "ought" and "will" is the predicate of origination, those projects and projections wherein the "I" acquires a worldly attribution and hence ratifies its originality.[8]

Thus, preaching his morality of self- and national consciousness, Attoh Ahuma, so to speak, puts on a new footing the "bridgework" that Ocansey--the power of his will betrayed by, and into serving, a colonial will--fails to perform on behalf of nativity. He gives us, that is, a conception of power that must be mustered from within (I am; I can): hence a self-reliant power. Additionally, in a dialectic involving part and whole, Attoh Ahuma presents this self-reliant power as one that fulfills itself as such only by being able to project its self-will outward to embrace a communal will at large. And this communal will, according to the early nationalist, was to be found in "Backward Movement," in a return to the immemorial native legacy of "our progenitors" (GCN,

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[7] The Gold Coast Nation, 20-25; 26-31.

[8] See Chapter 1, where, in a slightly different usage, I set nominative and attributive in a dialectical relation to give an account of the African writer's ongoing "search for a culture."

vii).

The previous chapter has shown us two middle class types who, without first looking back--which, for Attoh Ahuma, is a looking within--had contracted to bridge the distance between Europe and Africa. If, as exemplified centrally in Ferguson's work, this bridging was to be a reconciliation of nativity with the thought to be progressive attributes of European modernity, in the naive conception of this project and the negative consequences it portended, it spelled a failed middle class contract with its own nativity. We might see in Attoh Ahuma's "I ought; I will," then, a desire to renegotiate this contract and put it on a reformed basis. In that case, Attoh Ahuma's moral injunctions to a middle class to cultivate an inward- (or self-reliant) and outward- (or projective) looking self-consciousness imposes a contractual obligation on the self in the middle; it imposes a weighty obligation to reconcile backward movement with "a burning wish to advance" (GCN, vii).

On the one hand, then, we have the early nationalist's call to return inward to nativity; on the other, his call to project this return onto and into outward causes (in the political sense of the word) and worldly goals. Hence, in fact, the call to return to the native must read as a return of the native; an appropriative turning, that is, of the native towards the purposes of the middle. In this we may read the inception of a middle class mimetic contract.[9] To the extent that a contract is promissory and is necessarily conceived in the breach between parties, this mimetic contract promises, in a return of the native, to reconcile a hermeneutic of self-representation (a foundational self) with a

[9] "Mimetic" in the sense that, in its imaginary construction, part/self mirrors whole/social totality and vice versa.

politics of social representation (an "allegorically" representative self). In other words, in the mimetic contract, the self-consciousness in the middle rediscovers and embraces a native whole from which it has been divided and inducts into its thus refashioned self the will of this nativity. With self-will and native will harmonized such that one is the other and either is both, this will of the self-native (or nativized self-will) is then inducted into the worldly projects of the middle, endowing these projects with representative force.

As he reads himself into the tasks of his class in his time, what we see Attoh Ahuma pointing at--incipiently, as it were--are the central issues that come up for exploration and systematic formulation in Hayford's quasi-autobiographical Ethiopia Unbound. In Hayford, we find a nationalist for whom the assertions "I am, I can; I ought, I will" form the basis of a reformist mimetic contract between self and the native whole of which it is part. It is in the terms of this mimetic contract that autobiography encounters, and is resolved into, the middle class national allegory; that poetic self-figuration is troped into, and is legitimated by, the will of the polity (or "the people"); that hermeneutical self-representation accedes to, and is authorized in, social representation.

Additionally, we find in Hayford a middle class figure for whom the outstanding nationalist requirement for power to be mustered from within is displaced onto the question of an empowered and securely self-reliant nativity; for whom this nativity, translated into an inward-oriented system of knowledge, becomes a resolute nativism. However, its inward orientation notwithstanding, Hayfordian nativism proposes itself as

a very worldly projection. Its worldly premise is nothing less than, on the one hand, a return of the native to a politics of anti-colonial resistance; and, on the other, a philosophy of culture that might serve the activist ends of a racially conceived nationalism.

Nativism, as spelt out by the early nationalist intellectual, is in effect a gallant attempt to reconcile, within a single and singular framework, the political and cultural tasks arising from the determinations that had placed the middle in the roles of a class-for-power and a class-for-the-world. But, even in its singularity, we need to recognize its two-prongedness, too. On the one hand, Hayfordian nativism, following Blyden's lead, discloses an Ethiopianist dimension: here, it is mediated in a sustained comparativism, and its mode of existence reads as a relativity in and for the world. On the other hand, it has a political dimension to it that is immediate. Here, the frustrations of a Gold Coast middle class in domestic colonial politics yields a nativism of a relative absolutism. By this I mean a nativism whose mode of existing had to be in and for itself, and conducted in such absolute terms into a legitimation of a middle that was under intense political and cultural pressure to prove its representative worth.

In the second part of the chapter, I hope to bring out this dimension of the political. What I wish to consider in what follows is Hayfordian nativism as it disposes itself, in a worldly dimension of cultural activism, into a discourse of Ethiopia; at the comparative challenges confronting this discourse as it figures itself in relation to an idea of the worldly (or universal) already appropriated into the episteme of European imperial worlding.

I have suggested above that the work of Blyden--the man whose fate it was to find himself positioned between two worlds, Old and New--represents the earliest sustained foundational enterprise, nativism, in African nationalist discourse. Old World citizen though he had become, for much of his career, the Ethiopianist enthusiasms of Blyden were famously Americanist. What this reveals about him is a nationalist beholden, to a greater or lesser degree throughout his career, to a New World ideology of modernity.[10] Add to that his leanings toward Islam, and it means that Blyden's nativism when it appears is already tempered by and in a catholic cosmopolitanism.

By contrast, in the thought of Blyden's disciple, Hayford, we encounter an Old World nationalist whose interpretation of the former retains something of the cosmopolitan element of the trailblazer, but whose own achievement rests ultimately on a radicalization of Blyden's conservative insights. The reason--and it is worth repeating here what I have pointed out already--is that, even more so than his mentor Blyden's, Hayford's conservative nativism had to be founded on a double expedient. It had to be a nativism produced as much for the ends of an "eternal" cultural nationalism as it had to be produced for, and inserted within, the immediate and, for a Gold Coast class-for-power, frustrating political context in which this class had to operate. The double emergency of Hayford's situation notwithstanding, what the projects of Blyden and he reveal about their time is the complicity of New World African modernity and Old World

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[10] Consider: "the solution of Africa in America, is America in Africa; and, further, the solution of Africa in Africa is Africa in America." Or, again: "As the English language is diffused in [Africa], vivified by its domiciliation on the American continent...the native [African] will be raised unconsciously; and...be able to...carry out higher objects." Blyden, Negro Race 356-357; 368.

African modernity in an imaginary of the Same: a salutary ideal of a nativized Old World which, seized as a foundational hermeneutic, might shape common purposes and ends within a shared racial agenda and programme.

When all is said and done, however, it is to Blyden that the original credit must go for gingerly figuring a nativist knowledge in and out of the relativities implied by his cosmopolitan bearing. It is this relative knowledge-of-self, built as such in and through a sustained critical comparativism, that Hayford will in his turn radicalize into the quasi-absolutes of his own system.

In its critical dimension, Blyden's comparativist posture in a sense was foreordained. For his work grows out of a keen memory of a New World where being a Negro was to be oppressed by slavery; a New World where pervasive racial discrimination begged the question of the black person's humanity; and where the burden of a slave mentality confined this black person to a merely parodic existence (as he points out in the citation from "The Negro and Christianity" above). The return of the native to Blyden's work--as exemplified most centrally in his African Life and Customs (1908)--is thus premised on, and reveals a commitment to founding, an alternative to the existential, cultural, political and scientific knowledges by which a Eurocentric order, producing the comparative Nothingness of the Negro, had sanctioned, justified and mystified the burden of his oppression. To the extent that these processes had been achieved in the ideological capture of the universal as the consummate image of the white European (and Euro-American), an appropriation which denied racial others access to the same, Blyden's Ethiopianism (and that of his successors), if it was to be contestatory at

all, had little choice but to frame its activism in the same racialized episteme. An Ethiopianist nativism, in effect, had to be given a coding appropriate to its operation in what, after Europe and Euro-America, had become the ideological sphere of universal ideas.

Additionally, since the universalist Eurocentric episteme had been consolidated by and through an emptying of the Negro and his sphere into the European self, Blyden's pioneer Ethiopianism found itself under the compulsion to find a way out of this containment by seeking coherent self-formulation in the gaps, hesitations, absurdities, inconsistencies and contradictions in the seeming absolutes of Eurocentric knowledges.

All told, this is the inaugural dimension of relativity from which an African intellection had to draw its resources and, so to speak, force its own ransom. And if the work of Blyden begins in this realization, the opening pages of Ethiopia Unbound furnish yet another example. Here, speaking in comparative terms, a self-conscious Hayford remonstrates sharply against the negative stereotyping of a European pseudo-science that had produced "the black man...necessarily" as the "missing link between man and ape." As far as he can see, however--and Hayford is defiant in the assertion: "for intellectual endowments [the black man] had nothing to be ashamed of in an open competition with the Aryan or any other type" (EU, 1-2).

The early nationalist refers here to the reductive racial theories, associated with Gobineau and others, that had routinely consigned the black race as a whole to an intermediary position between the order of apes and the white race as a whole. The powerful desire of a Eurocentric pseudo-science to create a hierarchical symmetry for an

earthly chain of being meant that the whole of the black "race" came absolutely to stand in for the supposed "missing link" between man and ape posited in evolutionary biology. In the loaded evolutionary metaphors generating such classifications, then, the white race appeared absolutely as the "developed" figure of humanity, the world-figure par exellence. By the same token, the black race, willy nilly, was produced as the former's inverse and retrograde, in other words, "undeveloped"--or, at best, "underdeveloped"--stereotype.

To work with ideas about groups as a whole, in the manner of the racist scholarship described above, is to fix and arrest them as stereotypes. Fixing and arresting cannot be the whole story of stereotyping, however. For it is in the nature of the white European stereotype of itself, its reflexive racial stereotype, that is, to be both fixed as such--that is to say, "developed"--and still to possess an "unfixed" originality, in a manner permitting an idea of the European's free and continuous development in, and transversely across, space-time. No matter that non-European others occupied such space-times: being confined to locality, the knowledges of these others could only be localisms and hence feeble gestures which had neither originality nor force in the world, the world appropriated by Europe. In its imperialistic march across space-time, the putatively developed world-figure of Europe could therefore usurp these localities, converting them into mere ethnographic grist for its world-historical knowledge mill.

As we have seen in Hegel's The Philosophy of History, inasmuch as Europe needed a universal confirmation of its power in terms of its unfixed model of originality, the locality of Africa had perforce to be made to stand still, closed in upon itself.

Transferred to a pseudo-biology, this idea results in the fixed stereotype of the black race, a fixture which, being the missing link merely, stood below the threshold of humanity. As a lower form of humanity, the black racial being stood thus condemned to the perpetual backwardness of childhood. There are hierarchized themes that stand out in this construction of racial difference, namely: the universal beyond and over the merely ethnographic; racial maturity (white) over racial immaturity (black); the manhood of a master race over the childhood of subject races, and so on--all organized under the key trope of development. And to the extent that a racialized Africa was condemned to occupy the hierarchically lower order in these pairs, in their construction lies the intellectual expedient--complete with representative stereotypes, modes of interpretation, salient tropes, metaphors and figures--within which the culturalist dream of Ethiopian nationhood starts to take organizational shape.

In the beginning, then, it is Europe that proposes a holistic episteme defining the black race as its inverse, uncreated stereotype. For the self-conscious African intellectual coming after this beginning, the proposition that uncreates his race was thus one already imposing an urgent demand on him to work out a positive counterproposition. Not only that: this counterproposition had to be re-creative: in that sense, it had to differentiate--that is, "estrange" for its own purposes, alienate into its own working--the same terms proposed by Europe. The unacceptable alternative was to be left in the situation where the intellectual's racial being remained captive in a powerful European world-episteme that had pronounced this being as worth Nothing. As much again as the intellectual's nativity was trapped in a childhood sanctioned by the metaphoric-discursive (and, of

course, literal) power of Europe, he was virtually powerless to father himself in his own essential image, the image of "African manhood," as Hayford puts it in his quasi-autobiography. Given this circumstance the black and native intellectual could only remain aware of a self, his own, voided of substance and meaning, and displaced into the negatively stereotyped body and soul of his race.

For Blyden, Hayford and other early nationalist figures, therefore, the compelling question was how, in the circumstances, the literally captive body of Ethiopia would come to a knowledge of its own soul; and how, with this nativist guarantee, it would begin the tasks of freeing itself from physical and mental thraldom to Europe. How, then, in relation to a prevailing order of Eurocentric knowledge, was the role of the intellectual in a politics of culture to be conceived except in terms of a comparative advocacy--critical of the politics of imperial knowledge but also able to reach into this knowledge and creatively rescue the black racial being from the demeaning account given of it therein? Thus it is that, when we turn to the writings of Hayford and Blyden, a critical comparative advocacy is a more or less marked feature of these writings, turning on a principle of rescuing general concepts from, and attempting to decontaminate them of, the taint of Eurocentric universalism. What this "freeing" means for the intellectual's advocacy is to be read as the possibility, in a critical mode, of negating the prior negation (or dehumanization) of Africa achieved in the biased European episteme; and, concomitantly, in a re-creative mode, a redirecting of the general concept--given a truly humanist revaluation--into a purposeful knowledge of self in and for the general.

That in a general way is what comparative advocacy proposes in the nativist work

of the nationalist intellectual. And to turn to the particular example of Ethiopia Unbound is to see the autobiography of a nativist for whom the trope of "development" offers itself as one such general concept, critically needing, on the one hand, a human liberation from the Eurocentric account; on the other, needing to be creatively turned to Ethiopianist account. The inaugural question confronting Hayford in this mode may be put thus: how was the black and native intellectual to demonstrate, against Eurocentric claims to the contrary, that he was already in the world along his own original lines? And, as we find in Ethiopia Unbound and elsewhere, for the nativist intellectual, this challenge was an invitation to dialogue and compare; it was a call to him to demonstrate, by reasoning from his own nativist premises to general (i.e., human) conclusions, that he could produce his racial and native self in a parallel--and not uselessly inverse, as Eurocentrism would have it--image of the fixed model of the reflexive European stereotype; it was a call to show that he was developed in his own terms.

That was not all, however; other questions remained. Coming after Europe, the intellectual could truly respond to the former's universalist challenge only by finding the completion of his racial and native being in the world. How, then, could this intellectual's nativist originality be conceived in terms of the "imperialistic" model of development--as something always already towards the world; as something whose developed, hence authentic, essence was to be known in locality, but which, nevertheless, had a claim across space-time, beyond locality? What this meant was that the originality or, interchangeably, essence or genius, producing an Ethiopian locality-in-the-world had to gauge itself along the lines of the unfixed model of, again, the reflexive European

stereotype.

If these are some of the major relativist implications bequeathed by Blyden's thought, they are resolved into the problems that Hayfordian foundationalism had to bring itself to negotiate in Ethiopia Unbound. We find that for him, as for Blyden before him, if Europe could maintain its universality in the difference of the self-same; if, that is to say, the reflexive European stereotype could be both fixed and unfixed, original and originating; then there was meat in this conception to feed on. Utilizing a similar rubric, the nationalist intellectual could envision and perform his role as creative advocate first in a lively philology: that is, in the archival and archaeological activity of retrieving an original nativity. Such activity we would recognize as belonging in the fixed order of an absolute self-same.

Complementarily, the intellectual was enjoined to perform his advocacy in a model of self-extension. The work cut out for him in this self-extending mode is to be seen as the pedagogical act of projecting, beyond locality, a nativist knowledge of native originality onto a wider context. That wider context was both the immediate social one of the intellectual--hence Hayford's concern with a reformed pedagogy for the African--and that of the world at large, a world figured as a human commonwealth made up of distinct but equal racial beings. Such knowledge, however, was to be derived comparatively and relatively, from an unfixed order of difference which nevertheless contrived to remain subject to the discipline of the same. It is worldly knowledge therefore that had to "return" to seek its ratification in the ontological priority of a self-same nativity.

What sounds abstractly in the foregoing are the salient and, as it were, obligatory modes of interpretation in which the Ethiopianist nativism of early nationalism had to seek its self-definition and, therewith, to clarify for a middling generation on the rise its tasks as a class-for-the-world. Inasmuch as this nativism proposes the hermeneutic priority of nativity, this is what we find enacted in a poetics of allegorical return to a soul-Source in Ethiopia Unbound. And if the return of the native presupposes a reconciliation of the autobiographical and the allegorical, of self-will and native will, in the middle, Hayford's Ethiopia is inducted at once into either and both. Ethiopia reads as such as a mode of being and a mode of becoming. On the one hand, it exists in and for itself as foundational self-knowledge; on the other hand, we have this ideal translated into "Ethiopia Unbound." This translation might be thought as a projection that foresees a nativist foundation undergoing a nationalist reconstitution in which Ethiopia, otherwise captive in history and discourse, comes into its own, its existence guaranteed in and for the world.

The summation above has given a representation of the pan-Africanist visionary ideal in the large. What remains to be done is to pursue its nativist basis in Hayford's quasi-autobiography further, and show how its terms allow elements of critique to be fashioned from, and a creative cultural-nationalist imperative to be imposed on, the mundane colonial reality of the Gold Coast. I devote the rest of the chapter, then, to addressing some of the critical and creative ways in which Ethiopia Unbound exemplifies a resurgent nativity bringing a novel force to bear on the exchanges--discursive, cultural and political--within the African colonial ambience of the Gold Coast.

II. Between Past and Future Worlds of Native Perfection: Pedagogy and Critique in Hayford's Nationalist Reconciliation of Power and Culture

> Education that fails to recall and install into the minds of children the wisdom, brave deeds and civilization of the past is bound to produce an educated class of indigenes prone to foreign customs and ideals which will make them a soulless people in the land of their birth.
>
> --The Gold Coast Nation, 2 Sept. 1915.

> Beware
> Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,
> Bear't that the opposed may beware of thee.
>
> --Casely Hayford (citing Shakespeare's Hamlet)

In a stark contrast to the previous examples of Ferguson and Ocansey, Hayford's quasi-fictional intellectual autobiography presents the educated native in the redefined role of a (self-)critical "thinker." As such he shows himself able to question the unequal exchanges and alienating forms of knowledge that come with colonialism, and which together conspire to produce him as a mere dependent subject. Inasmuch then as he is forced by circumstance into the role of a contender, Hayford must question the imposed precepts of an alien system of governance and the cultural and religious mores that accompany and support it. Of the latter, the Christian religion, especially, is not spared to the extent that operating in a bastardized colonial form it "taught one thing, and practised another" (EU, 21).[11] As well Hayford is called upon to censure British

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[11] Consider also: "Were there such a thing as political ethics, or a pretence or semblance thereof among Christian nations, as there is semblance of some sort of Christianity in so-called Christian countries, it might be permissible to inquire how far the conduct of Christian nations in relation to aboriginal races, sometimes charitably called subject races, conformed to the Christian standard of morality" (EU, 95). Or, again (and here Hayford cites Blyden): "Christianity, as conceived and modified in Europe and America, with its oppressive hierarchy, its caste prejudices and limitations, its pecuniary burdens and exactions, its injurious intermeddling in the harmless and useful

governance for alienating into a colonial mode the will of a popular nativity (a nativity assumed more or less to find its self-expression in the polemical locutions of Hayford's autobiographical alter ego, the "cultured" father-figure Kwamankra).

It is to counter the modes of colonial alienation, therefore, that the question of pedagogical reform is raised as a crucial consideration in Ethiopia Unbound. Hayford vigorously challenges the validity for nativity of a European pedagogy, particularly in the colonialist forms this pedagogy took in the Gold Coast of his time. What this critical time argued for nativity instead, as he senses it, was a dissemination of a culturally and politically enhancing knowledge of "race emancipation." It is an argument the pioneer nationalist puts this way:

> The crux of the educational question, as it affects the African, is that Western methods denationalize him. He becomes a slave to foreign ways of life and thought. He will desire to be a slave no longer (EU, 192-193).

Hayford's anti-colonial polemics in Ethiopia Unbound reveal how the native African's education is an exercise in programmed alienation, managed by a colonial apparatus to reproduce nativity in a dependent colonial relationship. He points this out in the lamentable image of the "spoilt educated African" worked over and made useless by "the bad methods of the missionary" (EU, 197, 186). Colonial pedagogy, as he sees it, divides the native from himself,[12] leaving him in a state of epistemic and spiritual

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customs of alien peoples, is not the Christianity of Christ" (EU, 189).

[12] For instance, Hayford's alter-ego, Kwamankra, interrogates himself: "you have two warring elements in national development: what is it the white man expects me to do? What am I called upon by nature to do? Between these two the manhood of the race is throttled and sacrificed at the altar of convenience" (EU, 191). It is Kwamankra's opinion also that "it is not the spoilt educated African that may be expected to to help in the regenerative work of the world. The unspoilt son of the tropics, nursed in a tropical atmosphere, favourable to the growth of national life, he it is who may show us the way" (EU, 197).

vacuity. Hence his critique of the system existing in most missionary and (colonial) government schools which "tends distinctly to separate those...educated from their own race" (EU, 196). Not surprisingly, in a moment of pedagogical wish-fulfilment, Hayford concludes conservatively that the graduates of a University of the Gold Coast and Ashanti he foresees "will be men--no effete, mongrel, product of foreign systems" but men "trained...to preserve [a] national identity and race instincts" (EU, 197, 194).

The theme of education and a reformed pedagogy in Ethiopia Unbound goes hand in hand with Hayford's envisioning in an African nativity an ontology of resistance that can be used to fashion an independent African mode of being and knowing. Thirty years after African Trading, Ocansey's derivative poetry of substitution gives way in Ethiopia Unbound to a critical self-consciousness in search of an independent mode of being: the nationalist intellectual is figured in a demand to figure out an original poetics and politics of African self-belonging.[13]

If self-belonging is an urgent theme for Hayford, it is to the extent that he is burdened by the negative realization that, for an educated native middle class, as for its "unsophisticated... and less privileged brethren" (EU, 193), living under colonial dispensation means being bonded to a system of unequal exchanges. It falls on Hayford's fictional alter ego, therefore, to play the role of an advocate who probes history and brings to light the material forces shaping the pernicious arrangements of colonialism. If a genealogical reconstruction of history--in the special sense that Foucault uses the

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[13] Hence Hayford's conservative appeal: "When, in our modern way, we have demolished African strongholds, and, with the wantonness of an iconoclast, saved nothing to remind us of the artistic past and future possibilities of the people--nay, when we have laid out streets and encouraged shops to spring up...we think we have solved the mystery of the gods, while, all the time, the heart of the matter is not reached" (EU, 184).

term genealogy--reveals "systems of subjection" and the "hazardous play of dominations,"[14] Hayford's Darwinist account of the colonial encounter, marked by his special signature of Socratic irony, is such an exercise. He cites these revealing lines from Guy Eden's "The King of the Blacks":

> "Why should they live -- Fate has writ large its doom for them.
> Land for the whites! Let the black fellows die!" (EU, 118).

The citation is done as part of an indictment of the colonizing powers, reminding the "Christian European" nations who "seem to carry in the one hand a patent from the Almighty and absolution in the other to snatch away the patrimony of others" (EU, 117-118) of their negative heritage of exterminism.

Elsewhere, Hayford reveals how the tactics of divide and rule wielded by British power has wrought serious distortions on a native ethnosphere. That the new colonial dispensation breeds factional and sectarian violence among Africans is a fact to be regretted by all men of humanistic good sense. The champion of his nativity is also sharply critical of the Mammonist order colonially imposed on, and compromising, a pristinely imagined native order. In Hayford's diagnoses, colonial relations have imposed an unnatural logic of division on nativity, a logic whose consequences are directly observable in a contemporary Gold Coast and can be read off its immediate past history. Hayford's Gold Coast can thus stand in for a demoralized Ethiopia where, in obedience to a new, alienating rationality, addiction to the white man's drink reigned supreme; where, "children who had suckled at the same breast... were, as men, feign to slay one

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[14] Michel Foucault, Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977) 148.

another" (EU, 159), and where "in emulation of the white man's ways...[Ethiopians] bowed the knee in the House of Mammon." "What shall it profit a race," Hayford asks therefore, "if it shall gain the whole world and lose its own soul?" (EU, 160). It is a question that urgently demands of the intellectual, moved to conserve his racial soul, to supply a unanimist[15] counterpoint to the new forces of division.

Standing in a beleaguered nativity, Hayford assesses the impact of Europe on Africa in analyses that reveal the latter's disempowering loss of a sovereign purchase over, and rights of claim to, an ancestral patrimony. In this he is aided by the legal, ethical and humanistic modes of knowledge he has acquired. Thus the author's fictional alter ego, Kwamankra, accosts his colonial interlocutor: "it takes two to make a bargain as you will find when you examine the constitutional history of the [Gold Coast before the promulgation of the Colony]" (EU, 103). Here Hayford is pointing out how the consent to subjecthood demanded of the native by an alien power is an exacted consent, never one freely exchanged by the latter and hence in violation of the "law of nations" (EU, 25). Furthermore, what for nativity is a reductive colonial relationship occurs within a:

> theoretical policy and a practical one, the latter having as its aim such a shaping of circumstances as would forever make the Ethiopian in his own country a hewer of wood and drawer of water unto his Caucasian protector and so-called friend (EU, 98-99).

As far as this reductive relationship goes, Hayford is also keenly aware of how it sustains

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[15] "Unanimism" in strict usage describes the forms and styles peculiar to a "French poetic movement of the early twentieth-century which emphasized the submersion of the poet in the group consciousness..." (OED). It is the unanimist theme of "submersion in the group consciousness" that I am generalizing for Hayford's self-construction in Ethiopia Unbound.

and is sustained by the racist policies of the colonial Gold Coast state, policies that keep educated natives out of the Administration, effectively limiting the possibilities of meaningful exchange between these "cultured"--the term is Hayford's--natives and their white counterparts. His own diagnoses reveal to him why this must be so in order that a subject people, indifferently defined as such, might be positioned in a relation of perpetual subjugation. This demands a corrective. Here is Hayford's alter ego paying his colonial interlocutors back in their own coin:

> [I]f you took mankind in the aggregate, irrespective of race, and shook them up together, as you would the slips of paper in a jury panel box, you would find after the exercise that the cultured would shake themselves free and come together, and so would the uncouth...but, of course, you would ignore this law of nature, and with a wave of the hand, confine the races in separate air-tight compartments. Wherefore I preach reciprocity (EU, 105).

The question of "reciprocity" touches directly for Hayford on how a native patrimony might be rescued from an order of colonial fatality; how such rescue work might then launch the African, relative to himself and to the European, into a reconstituted context of empowered exchange. This is one of the dominant issues challenging and animating Hayford in Ethiopia Unbound.

What, then, does reciprocity mean for the self-fashioning of this native educated to become an intellectual? Among other things, it means that Hayford's fictional alter ego appears as an "insurgent" African intellectual, able to project himself in this role in a mode of creative resistance. Hence, for instance, if he finds himself time and again in contention against a servile Christian religion, the insurgent must reveal and uphold, against their colonial despoliation, the essential humanistic tenets and ethical values of

a Christianity deemed true. Augmenting these with the humane resources contained in the projective idealism of Enlightenment historicism,[16] Hayford radicalizes these humanistic universals in a comparative squaring of accounts--in a mutually enriching dialogue, that is--with elements from his own metaphysically derived nativist universe. As much as Hayfordian nativism reworks these universals towards the inclusive (i.e., Ethiopian or pan-African) ends of his nationalist self-affirmation in the world, he also projects in and through their reworking what is more or less an exclusive Ethiopian value for the world.

It is as a symbolic bearer of a universal Ethiopian value that the intellectual enacts a mythos of his insurgency in the opening chapters of Ethiopia Unbound. Hayford presents his alter ego in these chapters as a student in England. Unlike Ocansey in African Trading, Kwamankra functions as a bridgehead in "enemy" territory, the territory of those:

> [N]ations...who call themselves Christians, and who claim a monopoly of culture, knowledge and civilization, and who ergo think they have a heaven-born right to survive and thrive while all others go under. They are mostly whites...(EU, 109).

Finding himself in the territory of the nations who merely call themselves Christians, therefore, a skeptical Hayford must make destabilizing inroads into the cultural monopoly on the universal unjustifiably claimed by these nations. Hence we might read England, in these opening chapters, as enabling the opening up of a critical space for dialogue, in the universal, as it were. Over this space a repressed and devalued nativity inscribes its

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[16] Hence the echo, in the title of Hayford's quasi-autobiography, of Shelley's Prometheus Unbound. The latter's dream of the future freedom of a perfectible human race is conceived in the projective idealist mode of Enlightenment historicism.

universality by returning as humane critique and corrective of those problematic features of a colonialist European modernity, those features represented in Hayford's analyses as Europe's inhuman and exterminist character. Kwamankra, then, is the humane presentment of a resurgent nativity, a nativity which has returned to "probe" the "inner nature" of his English interlocutor, the aptly surnamed Silas Whitely. As for this inner nature of the latter, the returned native discovers it to be "shallow" (EU, 10). In a reversing of the counters, Nothingness--once, in the monopolistic and monologic scheme of imperial worlding, the preserve of nativity--is projected onto Whitely: he functions as Hayford's emblem of a decadence eating at the heart of European civilization. It is because this neurotic formation has perversely distanced itself from a "divine influence" (EU, 10) that it has disastrously forgotten its obligations to a commonwealth of humanity.

By contrast, Kwamankra, who is in full self-possession, functions as the affirmative symbol of a nativity that is rooted in a humane universal sanctioned by the divine influence itself.[17] In a contest framed as a Socratic dialogue, Whitely is therefore forced to concede to the African the moral and spiritual upper hand and, with it, those empty tokens of "culture, knowledge and civilization" by which Western nations have arrogated to themselves global overlordship. In prospect, Kwamankra declares: "the nation that can show the greatest output of spiritual strength, that is the nation that shall

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[17] Consider: "Before [the dawn of the twentieth century], it had been discovered that the black man was not necessarily the missing link between man and ape...Moreover, he was the scion of a spiritual sphere peculiar unto himself; for when Western Nations would have exhausted their energy in the vain struggle for the things which satisfy not, it was felt that it would be to [the African people] to whom the world would turn for inspiration, seeing that in them only would be found those elements which make for pure altruism, the leaven of all human experience" (EU, 1, 2).

lead the world, and as Buddha from Africa taught Asia, so may Africa again lead the way" (EU, 9).

With Hayford's call for reciprocity before us, we can see how the process of producing a subservient nativity was bound to encounter its limits in the very forms of knowledge and avenues of self-expression at once made available and foreclosed to the educated native by the colonial system. In Chapter 2 of the present study, we have seen the administrator, Sir Roger, addressing, two years before the publication of Hayford's quasi-autobiography, the existential contradiction facing a counterfeit middle class of native Africans in the colonial setting. Not only was the educated native of the Gold Coast "finished" as a "black Englishman," but he was "cursed" as such to be neither representatively black (i.e., native) nor representatively English. Compounding this absurdity of being representatively nothing was the educated native's being constrained to live under a social and political order where only the "Titan" of colonial power seemed to know "what the Titan wants" (EU, 69).

If this was the reality on the ground, then it must come as little surprise that the issues of identity, community and belonging come to be strategically mobilized by an awakened middle class--a class-for-power--engaged in a contest of wills with the Administration over the question of representation. Depending on which side of the colonially enforced racial divide one stood, a native sphere as a "natural" (EU, 95) constituency for an increasingly politicized African middle class was either in or out of question. It is an embattled Hayford who is thus compelled to write:

> The sagacious black man offers a point of resistance when he pleads his peculiar customs and institutions, and presto! the cry of the

> "educated native peril" is raised, as if forsooth, the "native" ceases to be a "native" the moment he is educated (EU, 118).

This is the educated native's protest against the bastardized forms of psychic and political existence that a machiavellian colonial machine had conspired to shape for him and his kind. In the plaint of Hayford's alter ego we begin to discern how colonialism's own methods of divide and rule impel a native middle class to enlist an essentialist politics of communal belonging to shape resistances on its own behalf and on behalf of nativity.

Inasmuch as in a racialized colonial ambience, the finished but flawed black article could not be exchanged for the white symbol of power, the former had to have been imposed upon to look for a different exchange orientation. This is where we see the valency of nativity for a nationalist class-for-power. Grasping his nativity as unalienated value, the nationalist intellectual appropriates it to name himself into an African value-in-and-for-itself. And having been so derived, this value-in-itself becomes then capable of being relationally transformed into empowering exchange-value. In this relational mode it appears as a value superordinate to the inhuman ones imposed by the white and colonial Other. Hence, for a class-for-power, as represented by Hayford, nativism not only sounds the theme of popular resistance to, but also foresees the eventual displacement of what, relative to an essential Africa, is a misplaced colonial State.

When, therefore, Hayford shows us his autobiographical alter ego, Kwamankra, pursuing a heroic course towards empowering self-recovery in his nativity, it is towards the requirements of anti-colonial resistance and nationalist displacement that this mythos fashions him as the bearer of a unique native value-dimension. However, to the extent that this recovery of self doubles as exchange-value for a Hayfordian nationalist

imaginary that, as such, must will into being a modernity of its own, it is also projected relevantly onto a progressive theme of self-development. In the revealing summation of the hero: "self-consciousness obviously depends upon self-revelation after which comes self-realization" (EU, 180). If self-revelation is to be achieved in a foundational before of nativity; if it is to be resolutely founded in a nativism, then the self-realization that comes after reads as the native foundation finding and taking on, from and with a newly self-conscious middle, a modernist attribution--i.e., nation. And this is to say that, to the extent that this modernist attribution is still to come from, to be composed and "patented"--and hence "owned"--by, the middle, to that extent does a foundational nativism become projectively nationalist.

Toward the ends of nationalist self-realization, therefore, the native intellectual in Ethiopia Unbound demands of himself a modality of self-fashioning different from the dependent one given in the colonial relationship. Hayford's alter ego protests: "What the unspoilt educated African feels he wants is rest--rest to think out his own thoughts, and work out his own salvation" (EU, 189; emph. mine). The nationalist intellectual, in an expanded charter, identifies his salvation with an emergent and far-seeing project; a project, as it were, for all time. The quest to save his own self is bound up with the performance of the rescue work necessary to reverse the universal "national and racial death" (EU, 75) that threatens his Ethiopia. This exigency imposes on Hayford the necessity of making a timely contribution to a project--as much foundational in character as utopian in reach--of establishing a self-owned and owning cultural-nationalist discourse. The nationalist intellectual is enjoined to seek out a mode of knowing that can

derive for his otherwise divided self an identity which will be the renewed nationalistic expression of a unified, unalienated native essence.

If "rest"--or withdrawal--from the ruling dystopian order of a colonialist modernity is a key requirement for this visionary project, it is because Hayford, who is one of the very few among many who can only "see a little more clearly ahead" (EU, 183), feels himself swimming against the powerful and blinding historical currents of the new rationality it has brought on. Hence the resolutely unanimist nativism of the nationalist intellectual. Imagined as furnishing a constant principle amid the confusions attendant on the colonial encounter, it provides a necessary philosophical countercurrent for the intellectual. As well, it underwrites the historicist premise of his quest for an African nationality that can function as a being-for-itself, a Self owned by itself and not by an Other, as premised by the colonial relationship.

Like his contemporary Rev. Atto Ahuma, Hayford preaches "backward movement" in the unshakeable nativist belief that "retrogression is the only progression that will save" his beloved Ethiopia. Unlike the former, though, the latter is no pluralist: the intellectual who proposes a saving nativism does so as a self-described "Ethiopian conservative." As nomenclature goes, his "Ethiopia" expansively records the proud, unique and unified antiquity of Africa. If, however, the present moment of her bondage parodies Ethiopia's antique greatness, Hayford is poised to project through a poetized narrative the personal intellectual fire that will go to work to loosen the bonds that divide Ethiopia from and against itself.

Hayford's Ethiopia, cast in these terms, becomes an inclusive supra-national sign:

if it ropes Africa and an African diaspora into its ambit, the idea of Ethiopia also announces a peculiar hermeneutic and philosophy of history. For given the de facto worlding of Africa by European imperialism--and to the extent that Europe's Africa is trapped in the former's modes of worlding as Nothing--a recovery of its inner native essence requires of the intellectual not merely a return to Source. It requires him, above all, to enact this return as the projection outward, the worlding or world-definition of a singular Ethiopian patrimony. Thus, as it gestures towards this definition, Hayford's Ethiopia draws first on the inner world of the author's native Fanti ethnosphere. This resource is then generalized for a nationalized colonial Gold Coast. Finally, it emerges, in a poetry of grand restitution, as an ascendent, pan-optic vision that restores and incorporates within the "Father's house" (EU, 181)[18] an Africa (including the diaspora) sundered from its pristine self-identity.

Blyden had anticipated Hayford's theme of Ethiopian restitution in the observation that:

> The restoration of the Negro to the land of his fathers will be the restoration of a race to its original integrity, to itself; and working by itself, for itself and from itself, it will discover the methods of its own development, and they will not be the same as the Anglo-Saxon methods.[19]

If Blyden's racialized logic of exceptional development required the foundational cultural and intellectual task of recuperating the originality of the native fathers, Hayford shows

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[18] Hayford mentions his newspaper, the Gold Coast Nation and the Ethiopian Review, "promoting the interests of Gold Coast national conservancy; but as time went on it had broadened out in sympathy to embrace the needs of the entire race" (EU, 207).

[19] Blyden, Negro Race 110.

himself able to pick up the challenge. His alter ego, Kwamankra, performing his nationalist messengerhood in Ethiopia Unbound, will, in the sankofa mode, return to nativity as a prelude to a regathering and reconnecting of Ethiopians the "wide world over" with the integrity of the fatherland.

The intellectual quasi-autobiography of the Gold Coast nativist thinker, is thus staked upon a faith in the ability of a newly self-conscious African middle class to assume and discharge the role of a class-for-the-world; to assume and discharge, that is, the large role of reconciling an inner and an outer, a core and a fringe, a traditional and a modern, Africa. In this mode of expanded endeavour, Kwamankra, Hayford's alter ego, is set up as an exemplary role-model. He is suited to this role because, in the mythology of Ethiopia Unbound, he is a presentment of native wholeness; a model Ethiopian who, as far as a nativist self-consciousness goes, is not only present to himself but is also, over time, able to realize his self-presence. Kwamankra thus figures the Hayfordian ideal of a dynamic, self-realizing Ethiopian identity. To the extent that a bedrock of native presence or originality is virtually already there with this middle class figure he is the guarantee that the reformed nationalist identity of Ethiopia will be realized in the world on and within its own terms.

In keeping with this theme of ownership of terms, we have Hayford's insistence--and he echoes Blyden, once more--on the "eternal verity" that the "natural line of development for the aborigines is racial and national" (EU, 69). The requirement imposed on the intellectual is a seizure of the initiative to perform the ontological and political rescue work of "developing African life and African idiosyncracies along the

line of natural and healthy development" (EU, 184). In Ethiopia Unbound, therefore, as the middle class intellectual is defined in the sankofa motions of willing himself into an originary native presence (as we will see shortly below), an auxiliary nativist theme of timely "development" also enjoins him to create in and for himself "elbow room"--a nation-space, that is--where he might manoeuvre himself into a knowledge of, and shape new purposes out of and for, the native African idiosyncracies so defined.

Cast by the nationalist intellectual in a dynamic, self-realizing form, then, a nativist identity appears as a sameness, a primordially given interiority, that is nevertheless predisposed to be filled incrementally. For this reason, Ethiopia Unbound shows us a nationalist intellectual who is engaged in the sublimely circular task of working from and towards an Ethiopian disposition in the self-same. That is, he figures a past perfect as much as a future perfect is prefigured in him. As he moves between past perfect and future perfect, this self-same figure of the native nationalist is complementarily displaced in this mode, as he must be if the circle is to be virtuous, into an original Ethiopian (or pan-African) nationality to be fulfilled over time and space. I turn now, in the next section, to explore these poetic figurations and their resonances in what might well be black Africa's premier national(ist) allegory.

III. Fathering Forth the Collective Character: Hayfordian Characterology and the Birth of the (African) National Allegory

> [To promote] the sturdy and vigorous development of [a] national character racy of the soil.
>
> --John Mensah Sarbah, Fanti National Constitution

A good deal of the nationalistic polemic of Ethiopia Unbound is presented as an essayistic contribution to an emergent pan-African discursive think-tank. But much of it is also an extended footnote to the illustrious pioneering work of Blyden. As much, however, as the thinker Hayford's Ethiopianism appears in a distinctly intellectual light, his nation is also crafted as a poetic-allegorical fiction. His quasi-fictional autobiography presents also the story of an individual compelled to look "inward" and seek the terms with which to positively transform the intolerable dilemmas placed on him by a social existence. The theme of the self on a quest, couched in a vision of regeneration, looks towards the hero's self-recovery in a Sublime of African nativity. Kwamankra's poetic self-recovery foresees a transformation of the "convenience" (EU, 191) of a colonial state and the educated native middle class which is its bastard product, into, respectively, an essential nationality and its "natural" leadership.

We have seen how in the machinations of colonial politics, the educated native, in the Gold Coast and elsewhere in West Africa, is denied any valid grounding in his nativity and, with this denial, the authority to represent the native people. I have also pointed out that a mimetic contract emerges from the middle in response to this denial of its social and political representativeness. The terms of the contract, as we saw, are moulded to suit a middle seeking to reclaim a patrimonial authority usurped by the colonial and in the process newly repositioning itself as a class-for-power. To read Ethiopia Unbound with the immediate contests of turn of the century and early-twentieth century colonial politics in mind, then, is to encounter a performance of the mimetic contract with a vengeance in this testimony of the middle class figure who would

represent his nativity.

Insofar as it sought the authorization to make Hayford a representative of the people, the literary politics of the nationalist's self-nomination in Ethiopia Unbound could not derive its poetry from the "superficial" historical reality of nativity, a nativity whose present, because it knew colonial de-authorization, was written in compromise. On the contrary, the figuration of authority in the mimetic contract required it to be anchored in an order of permanence, hence in a nativity imagined in a sublime, timeless order secured against hazard and accident. Hence Hayford's conservative nativism: it preserves (or conserves) authority in a non-negotiable essence and seeks thus to secure for all time a class-for-power seeking its nationalist nomination in popular representation. It is for this reason that a mere, profane realism had to have been inadequate for a fashioning of the (nativist) mimetic contract in Ethiopia Unbound. On the contrary, the narrative vehicle of the contract, in actual terms compelled to carry a this-worldly historical burden, had perforce to find its tenor and style in the "inward motions" of spiritual allegory.

It is as a hierophant--a spiritual figure--then that Kwamankra, Hayford's heroic self-nomination and representative of Ethiopia, appears. Compelled to salutarily operate in a temporal sphere, Kwamankra is the living, active nationalist embodiment and expression of a sometime native, sometime racial, but always eternal Will (or Spirit or Geist). His well-chosen Fanti-Akan name literally means "emissary- or bearer-of-the-national-soul" (Kwa: servant, emissary or messenger; (O)man: nativity/nation; Kra: soul, spirit). That the name Kwamankra ascribes a popular public role for the nationalist

intellectual is derivable from its etymology. It identifies him as a member of a spiritual community, now Fanti, now Ethiopian, and now generalizable, in a spirit that recognizes national belonging as a world-historical necessity, to include "a congregation of select souls" (EU, 56). These "select souls" are accorded a high Hayfordian recognition for working towards the fulfilment of the singular destinies of their respective nations. In the essentialist terms of this theme, the native intellectual is authorized to write his singular nation's free and differential realization of the God-gift of its own self into a world-historical necessity.[20]

Consecrated as a "man-god," Kwamankra is also endowed as a "thinker" (EU, 53). Inasmuch as he appears in an anticipatory narrative frame as the supreme temporal expression of the God-gift, he is also the thoughtful figure chosen and entrusted with the task of building and fulfilling the essential soul of an Ethiopian nation in a this-worldly dispensation. As the principle which must body forth a pan-African nation-soul, the figure of the nationalist intellectual does double allegorical work in the mimetic contract. On the one hand, the contract demands of him a rousing poetic and quasi-religious invocation: and this is what we see in the sankofa motions of a figural return to Source. On the other hand, the metaphysical invocation is required to be redirected from the Source towards the political self-incarnation of Ethiopia in a mundane historical order.

The heroic poetry of Kwamankra's allegorical return to, and immersion in, a soul-Source in the fourth chapter of Ethiopia Unbound records, then, Hayford's reaching for

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[20] Again cf. Blyden who writes: "the native capacities of mankind differ and their work and destiny differ, so that the road by which one man may attain to the highest efficiency is not that which would conduce to the success of another." Africa and the Africans (1903). Cited by V. Y. Mudimbe, The Invention of Africa (Indianapolis and Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1988) 113.

an inspirational Sublime. "Bending the full force of his will to the task," Kwamankra embarks on a return journey to Nanamu Krome, the abode of the forefathers, to seek his "beloved" (EU, 46). On this journey of return, the hero's nativity is produced as a feminized principle of prized value from which he has long been distanced. This leaves the heroic quester "wondering":

> Over and over again...whether his beloved was truly dead, or dead only to his physical senses. And confidence renewed, evermore building upon adamantine foundations, wafted a vow to heaven that his one quest would be to learn the way to her (EU, 50).

Here Hayford conveys through an acute sense of bereavement, the necessity for his resolute metaphysical foundationalism. The anxious themes of finding his way to an original principle and of founding himself are not really separable concerns. Understood in the matrix of being and knowing--whose poetic inscription the themes of finding and founding are set up to be anyway--Hayford's cognitive act of finding the Source, the arche of the native self, therefore mirrors and reciprocally partakes in a normative ("adamantine") act of founding. This seeking out of a foundation, this establishment of an irreducible norm of nativity, is an orientational act, too--it looks towards present and future modes of path-finding--to the extent that it looks to locate a constant principle in the contingencies of time. Hayford's foundationalism, in effect, posits a telos since it is future (self-)realization, and the ownership thereof, that are to be given a principled foundation in the nativist return to Source.

The thematic counterpoint of loss and independent resolve that projects Kwamankra into a questing figure resonates within the central Hayfordian theme of the colonial Other's spoliation of a pristine native body. As well, it registers this alien

Other's ongoing usurpation of the soul that is the latter's Ethiopian patrimony.[21] We have seen this in the intellectual's analyses which situate the colonial subjecthood of the native African in terms of a deathly alienation of Self by an Other. It is in such terms that allegorical figurations of Hayford displace his alter ego into the poetic image of the native body sundered from the soul of its nativity. This, in Ethiopia Unbound, is the poetic representation of the colonial problem. If so, Hayford seeks a formal resolution in allegory, a medium congenially lending itself to imagining the creative re-articulation of a native self felt to be divided from and against itself.

The allegorical imagination of Hayford must thus interpose allegory as such--which, speaking in formal terms, describes the temporal movement which at once returns and projects the quasi-autobiographical narrative towards a pole of ideality--in the "static" framework of analysis as such: that is, on the critique he does of the colonial reality of his history. Inasmuch as we see a critical, shrewdly anti-colonial side to the nationalist intellectual, we may not overlook the groping beginnings of the creative idealism represented by the allegorical element that accompanies his criticisms. The dose of idealism was necessary if Hayford was to go beyond a mere name-calling match with his white colonial detractors, and to emerge into a name-making, essentially pro-creative mode--if the nationalist intellectual, in other words, was to fulfillingly "impregnate" with meaning the space he had cleared for himself with the weapons of insurgent critique. In this sense the idealism imparted by allegorical representation purposefully articulates an anticipatory and holistic framework of meaning.

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[21] As in Blyden's insight above, this usurpation means that for the native "to be himself is to be nothing..."

In Hayford's alter ego, Kwamankra, then, we see the orders of "fact" and "figurality"[22]--representing the thematic pairings of critique and creativity, body and soul, time and eternity, severance and reconnection--beginning to seek and find a mode of allegorical reconciliation. The mission of the temporal leader is cut out for him in these terms as one of moving beyond diagnosis towards a healing reunion of body and soul. And if Kwamankra's body stands in for an Ethiopian body politic which, in time, has been dis-eased by the accident of colonialism (the same furnishing the pole of his critical analyses), his soul, wholesomely lying beyond accident, traces out a transcendent (hence eternal) domain of a pure native essentiality. The poetics of soul in this regard goes beyond mere possibility and signals the creative certainty of a recoverable beginning.

The prelude to Kwamankra's symbolic, re-creative journey is marked with the formulation of an entelechy[23] by Hayford. It expresses the relation between body and soul, between the temporal and the eternal, that, as the figural embodiment of the Ethiopian national soul, a desirous Hayford wills himself to bring to creative realization. Hayford writes: "the Infinite finds expression in the finite, and the ideal is realised in the actual" (EU, 34). Hence from Nanamu Krome, the symbolic dimension of sublime fore-fatherhood, Hayford, the heir of "finite" leadership, is put upon to seek out and project for his temporal fatherhood an inspirational mode of being. The quester's goal is to retrieve in and for himself the natal "soul-breath" that will creatively enliven the body of his nation in a worldly dispensation. Hence, we see Kwamankra recovering a principle

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[22] See Frank Kermode, The Genesis of Secrecy (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1979) 104.

[23] Entelechy: "actuality: distinctness of realised existence: a vital principle supposed by vitalists to direct processes in an organism towards realisation of a certain end" (Chambers Dictionary).

of Ethiopian fatherhood which, to the extent that it is imagined in generative terms, aligns an absolute beginning with the continuity of new beginnings. Therein, the Hayfordian imaginary reconciles newness with oldness in a way that resolves present contingency (the open-ended future anterior) within the epic closure of the past.[24]

We might reformulate this in terms of the epigraph that sums up the conservative entelechy that Wordsworth sets out in his "Ode: Intimations of Immortality..." The English Romantic writes: "The Child is the father of the Man;/And I could wish my days to be bound each to each by natural Piety."[25] The poet's desire to secure immanence in continuity, sameness in difference, finds a parallel formulation in Ethiopia Unbound. Broadly speaking, it is this theme--which now subsumes within itself, now extends, a dialectic of old (beginnings) and new (beginnings), nativist and modernist, foundation and end-goal, backward and forward movement, permanence and emergence, part and whole --that delimits the allegorical horizon in which Hayford's quasi-autobiography moves. Either side of the dialectic, in the resolution profferred by our Ethiopian conservative, then, comes to prefigure the other in reversible and, hence, perfectible time.

This is the continuum out of which Hayford's confidently prophetic universalism, finally, issues. If his nation, "among the nations, typifies...the developed character [of true humility] to-day more than any other," then he wishes his interlocutors to know that in order that the Ethiopia so characterized might "carry on her [universal] mission of

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[24] Cf., for instance, this characterization of epic heroes by Bakhtin: "[They] receive their value and grandeur...through [their] association with the past, the source of all authentic reality and value." See Mikhail Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981) 18.

[25] I have consulted in particular The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth, eds. E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1947).

peace what is wanted is the opportunity of inter-communication." A wish-fulfilling Hayford thus finds it:

> conceivable that some day it may be possible to reach Lake Chad from Northern Nigeria, and Kumasi to become a great centre for converging lines of the Cape to Cairo railway. When that eventuality happens, and Ethiopia will have entered upon her spiritual mission, then, hoary with age, and freed from the trammels of so-called world progress, aims and ambitions, she shall pursue her onward path to God in the way of humble service to mankind; and, so, the saying of the seer shall become true that "A little child shall lead them" (EU, 215; emph. mine).

Here, as elsewhere in Ethiopia Unbound, Hayford projects, in the mutual reflexivity of Ethiopia's "hoary age" and its salutary childhood, images that point to a reassuring teleology. In the thinker's poetic scheme, generative beginnings must needs coincide with regenerative ends. And this must be so if the prophetically imminent resurgence of the national body of Ethiopia is to complete and make virtuous a world-historical circle rendered vicious by a predatory colonial-imperialism. That a humanistic ideal of true universality will be realized in the bodying forth of the exceptional Ethiopian nation remains for the intellectual an article of faith to the end.[26]

For this reason a recouping of beginnings in Ethiopia Unbound is to be vested in a consequential national "character" (EU, 61). Hayford's heroic self-representation as the growing, developing, but even then, reversible, "child-father," and "man-god,"[27] signals a theme of aspiration in terms of which Ethiopia's historic re-emergence is presented as

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[26] Cf. "Are not the Ethiopians a peculiar people, destined for a peculiar part in the world's work?" (EU, 160).

[27] See p. 34 for a dialogue on the child-father theme; on p. 2, we will have to count Hayford among the "others" he refers to, who comprise the illustrious "sons of God." If these are imagined as temporal aspirants towards a universal godhead, Hayford's imaginary of the universal, nevertheless, is mediated through the particularity of racial and national belonging.

a soul-fulfilling bodying forth of a pre-existing characterological essence. Allegorically inscribed on and as the soul-body of his nation, Kwamankra is a representative expression of this essential national character, defined by Hayford broadly within the moral-patriotic themes of cultivating trustworthiness, performing humble service to, and showing love for, the nation, being ready to display courageous self-dedication to its defence and advancement, playing the advocate on its behalf, and so on.

If, however, these characterological qualities are virtually already there with him as the bearer of an Ethiopian essence, a rounded national character is still to be productively realized in history. Hence, when the emissary of the gods is shown "rising up a new structure of considerable beauty and strength" in Nanamu Krome, his guide and interlocutrix is quick to point out structural imperfections in this architectural representation of the national character: "Behold...the symmetry of this building. It is such as displeases not the gods. Yet, if thou perceivest clearly, thou wilt see a seam here, a fissure there, unevenness in places where there should be uniformity." The inspirational message for the one who both seeks after and embodies the unique godhead of Ethiopia is that before attaining a "translation" to the eternal--that is, ideal perfection--"our beings must be rounded off, and every phase of our development completed." And for this purpose we are "given opportunity after opportunity" (EU, 60).

This inspirational message could be read as a reminder to Kwamankra that, as constrained as he is by having to operate within the historical and political limits set by a colonial dispensation, this dispensation is nevertheless still to be thought as a conjunctural one. If, as such, it leaves possible spaces for negotiation and manoeuvre,

these spaces are the windows of "opportunity" through which nationalism must will its self-translation, as it were, into the worldly self-affirmation of Ethiopia. Hence Hayford's charge-and he relies, significantly, on a metaphor of space-clearing--to a class-for-power to practise a strategic opportunism. Observes the nationalist:

> African manhood demands that the Ethiopian should seek not his opportunity, or ask for elbow room from the white man, but that he should create the one or the other for himself" (EU, 182).

It is in the opportunistic mode that the nationalist seizes himself as a pro-creative agency, his historical task being that of promoting the maturation and advancement of a native Ethiopian character from colonially enforced minority towards the majority of national "manhood."

Given the pressures imposed on the middle by colonial history, how are the themes of character and (space-clearing) opportunity raised by Ethiopia Unbound to be understood in a mutual relation? It is true that we can see a Hayfordian characterology which encompasses a set of maxims, precepts and exemplary principles that might act as guides to individual behaviour--seeking, in short, to reform the individual into a patriotic ideal of moral personhood.[28] Still, we need to displace the characterological self-conception of Hayford, as exemplified by his alter ego, from a simple formula for individual reform into something vaster. For it is through the figurations of a middle class character that the nationalist seeks to define the institutional basis, and hence to procure the authority and legitimation, to make a class-for-power into the people's

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[28] Cf. Chapter XII, "A Leader of Society," where we may suppose Hayford-Kwamankra reforms the character of the dandy Afro-European, Tom Palmer, into nativist "perfection." If moral personhood is the issue in this exemplary vignette, Hayford can be seen imagining in its terms a (perfectible) middle class standing at the beginning of a reformed national society.

representative. If the former--institutionalization--is about founding; if its premise is the guarantee of a foundation, the latter--procuring legitimation--is about finding, about building on and consummating the foundation.

It is to this end that, as the quasi-autobiography shifts into the key of national allegory, Hayfordian characterology is posited in and as a framework linking eternal (or the "Infinite") beginning and temporal opportunity (or "finite" beginning, where and upon whose basis a negotiated quest to materialize the Infinite takes place). Inasmuch as the Infinite is a foundational and eternal past perfect--the Idea in which the Soul of nativity moves--the finite is a historical imperfect: it is that which, to the extent that it imagines a perfectible future, represents a space of opportunity and a time still to come. Between Infinite and finite, then, Hayford salutarily interposes the middle class character as this space of opportunity and time to come; as the representative form-content of the nation which will be the popular and consummate embodiment of the native soul.

Thus, the middle class character is projected onto nationalist praxis--i. e., the domain which creatively seizes and transforms opportunity--as the end-foreshadowed beginning of a national people's motion towards self-realization in the world. Hayford, in other words, performs a double order of allegorical negotiation in which the middle in the here and now (or future anterior) assumes into itself both a representation of the popular nation which will be and of the native Soul of the eternal past (or that Idea of which the national people's becoming will be a bodily fulfillment).

Where the historical body-politic of the native people enters into all this, then, is in the Hayfordian order of opportunity, the order of the historical imperfect. The people

figure as the historical beginning of a praxis; but as a new beginning they are already ratified by an old, immemorial beginning, a popular past perfect. And this is so to the extent that old and new, the always already and still to come, are formally mediated by the character in the middle and in-corporated--i. e., given "bodily" content or expression--in and by this character as nationalist. In-corporated in the middle, the nationalist character features as a "transducer," abstracting into and towards itself both form (or eternal Idea) and content (the real native people who are and will be the expression of the eternal Idea). That is to say, lying in-between, the middle does service by complementing form and content, Idea and substance. And it does so in a mediation--in a nationalist in-corporation, that is--wherein these elements are imagined in a reversible teleology that reassuringly reconciles past and future. Reading itself in an, as it were, transitional future-past, therefore, the middle comes out, at one and the same time, as perfect and perfectible.

In these terms, Hayford's middle, as the embodiment of form--the abstract "realness" of the mould of the eternal Idea--is at once pre-figured in the past (and hence is a foundation, a bedrock) and pre-figures the future, the latter to the extent that the middle, in itself, finds and preserves the shape of the old, and, for itself, directs and leads a new, popular content into this resurgent mould. Again, as the embodiment of a concrete content (the native people) the middle is prefigured in the past as that which has always been represented in, and hence is foundationally representative of, the native people; and it prefigures the future as that which must always represent the native people. The latter is presumed in Hayford's anxious question: "but for the educated

native where will his unsophisticated brethren be?"--to which he adds the pious prayer: "heaven grant that the educated native may never be wanting in his duty to his less privileged brethren, or betray their trust in him" (EU, 193).

Thus the middle reads itself into the national character as the expression of an ideal finitude: it is the foundational already (a past perfect) whose tasks are nevertheless still to come (hence anticipating a perfectible future). But it is more: since these tasks, as his own pious wish reveals, were more or less the prerogative of an educated native middle class, Hayford's answer to the historical problem of leading an Ethiopian character into maturity--the nativist mimetic contract, that is--secures the popular representativeness of the nationalist intellectual in every advantageous way. Looking at the reversible construction put on characterological form and content the implication is that if form, the Ideal usurped into the definition of the middle, seeks its nationalist self-realization in a reform of an unrefined--i.e., a historically imperfect--popular content, it does so as the latter's projected medium of perfection. An unformed and as yet waiting to be formed popular content must thus, it seems, come to know its authentic form--arrive, that is to say, at self-realizing refinement--only in the conservatively perfect form and perfectible content of the middle class nationalist character.

Thus Hayford's conservative resolution of the middle class problem of representation created by the presence of colonial power. In the resolution proferred by the Hayfordian allegory of nation, then, the unanimist nationalist intellectual in the middle (the one, the part) is and has always been an expression of the native people (the whole), and either is and will be the expression of both, as they look towards the

consummation of the destiny of a singular Ethiopian character.

When all is said and done, the ideologeme[29] of character in the nationalist allegory positions the middle as a figural pathway through which a creative energy might be generated, conducted and channelled for the purposes of relating the nationalist's Africa fully to itself and, gauged in the self-serving terms of African modernity, to the world. The hopeful preparation toward this is to be found in the initial expenditure by Hayford of what the poet Adrienne Rich has called "energy of relation."[30] Before and along with Hayford, other pioneer nationalist figures--to those we have mentioned already, we must add such names as James Brew and C. C. Reindorf from the Gold Coast; Nigeria's Herbert Macaulay and Mojola Agbegbi, etc.--had expended a similar energy. These outstanding middle class figures had done so from a standpoint that suggested that "our history, our customs, our characters are unintelligible to us until we know them" (EU, 195). In effect, to be oneself and to know oneself for these native intellectuals were two sides of the same coin: neither was dispensable in the definition of the other. If so this left the intellectual in the indispensable role of being the middleman, mediating in a responsible nativism, as we see Hayford doing, a gnosis (order of knowing) and ontology (order of being) that would be African.

To the end, then, Hayford's nationalist passion--his energy of relation--is driven

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[29] Following Jameson, an ideologeme is "the minimal unit around which class discourses are organized; simultaneously a pseudo-idea, susceptible to conceptual description, and a proto-narrative, a kind of ultimate class fantasy about 'collective characters.'" See Abdul JanMohamed, Manichean Aesthetics (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983) 279. (JanMohamed's is a rearranged citation of Frederic Jameson. See the latter's The Political Unconscious Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981: 87, 115. And see also Bakhtin, The Dialogic Imagination 429).

[30] Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken," in Adrienne Rich's Poetry and Prose, eds. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (New York and London: Norton, 1993) 174. From the same piece comes the expression "energy of creation," which I utilize below.

by the possibility of the beginning and end of an Ethiopian national people meeting wholesomely in the middle. It shapes the trajectory of his thought, thought alive to the conjunctural opportunities that the situation of being in the middle--at once European-educated and native--brought with it.

Inasmuch as this nationalist energy registers creatively in Ethiopia Unbound, this work, its many-sided formation notwithstanding, may be seen with some justification as the first modern African literary (nationalist) classic. And this is true to the extent that this is a work self-consciously written to show the self in the middle engaged in a creative confrontation with (a colonialist) modernity. In that regard, therefore, Ethiopia Unbound deserves to be rescued from the obscurity and silence which, because it has not been thought to be "literary" enough, has hitherto been its pedagogical fate. That assessment is an unfair one.[31] For Hayford's struggles with and in the difficult temporality of a colonialist modernity, necessary if he was to win for his Ethiopian nationality the terms of her own being in the world, produces a literature[32] whose creativity as such rewards us nearly a hundred years on with insights into our condition, the condition of being modern and its strange corollary, the predicament of having to be African within this modernity.

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[31] For the formalists and purists, finding it difficult to locate a place under the compartmentalizations of Literature to fit Hayford's quasi-fictional autobiography, Ethiopia Unbound is not enough of a novel or it is a political tract with pretensions to the literary, and so on. But the spirit of the work--as I have tried to show, reading out the national(ist) allegory--is a literary one (or that of creative literature) and argues a place for Hayford on the African literature curriculum.

[32] Hayford's reformist characterological spirit is comparable to the motivations going into the works of such great English realists as, say, Jane Austen and George Eliot.

That, in spite of the idealist register of its beginnings, African nationalism had become a material force by the time Hayford passed on is illustrated by an ardent Gold Coast youth passing through the imperial centre on his way to America in the 1930s:

> But just as I was feeling particularly depressed about the future...on [a] placard I read: "MUSSOLINI INVADES ETHIOPIA." That was all I needed. At that moment it was almost as if the whole of London had suddenly declared war on me personally. For the next few minutes I could do nothing but glare at each impassive face wondering if those people could possibly realize the wickedness of colonialism, and praying that the day might come when I could play my part in bringing about the downfall of such a system. My nationalism surged to the fore; I was ready and willing to go through hell itself, if need be to achieve my object.[33]

Nkrumah's passion is a tribute to those, Hayford prominent among them, who, in the political, discursive and cultural formation of African nationalism, pioneered a redirection of the energy of relation of a middle class towards the imaginative and actual transformation of the spaces of an African nativity held captive by colonialism.

If one such historically emergent space was "Ghana," it is necessary to constitute it, in a literary pursuit of Nkrumah's own infernal reading of colonialism, as lying at the interface between the colonial "hell" of the Gold Coast, on the one hand; and the promise of "heaven" implicit in an Ethiopian, pan-African nationality, on the other. Dreamed in the Nkrumahist imaginary as a temporary if pragmatically necessary incarnation of Ethiopia, an Ethiopia towards which it was and will always be enjoined to strive, Ghana

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[33] Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (New York: International Publishers, 1971) 27. Nkrumah is here referring to the real Ethiopia (also known as Abyssinia), the East African country invaded and occupied by the fascist forces of Mussolini in the period leading up to the Second World War. Hayford's "Ethiopia" is an abstraction from this historical entity. How Ethiopia became an all-African idea has, of course, a fascinating history of its own. See, for instance, Mudimbe's The Invention of Africa for an account.

could be framed in a tantalizing politics of the possible as the foreshortened name of Africa itself.[34]

In 1942, when Nkrumah graduated from the Lincoln Theological Seminary and gave a graduation oration whose subject was "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God," "Ghana," like the Ethiopia to come, was still an "empty" name, an ideal form whose patent in the Gold Coast was wielded, as we have seen, by the nationalist intellectual J. B. Danquah. For the longest while, it was the fate of Danquah's Ghana, to pursue a classic Hayfordian middle class conceit, to remain a semblance (i.e., an ideal form), as such awaiting its infusion with characterological content (i.e., a national people). As it turned out, Ghana's part-fulfillment of Ethiopia's nationalist promise did not happen until 1957, and then only after a characterology reinvented by Nkrumah had intervened in the middle. It is Nkrumah, on the ascendent after 1947, who comes to augment the relational energy of an earlier phase of African nationalism with a new dynamic and revisionist energy of creation. Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah, to which we turn next, is a record of this historic process.

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[34] Hence Nkrumah's famous "The Independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked to the total liberation of the (African) continent."

CHAPTER 5

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE IN THE TIME OF THE NATION

From Hierophant to Communicant: Ethiopia Unbound to Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah

> The times are changing and we must change with them. In doing so we must combine the best in Western culture with the best in African culture. The magic story of human achievement gives irrefutable proof that as soon as an awakened intelligentsia emerges among a so-called subject people, it becomes the vanguard of the struggle against alien rule. It provides the nucleus of the dominant wish and aspiration, the desire to be free to breathe the air of freedom which is theirs to breathe.
>
> --Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana

> Here is a man of great magnetic force, evoking sympathy and love wherever he goes. But he is a mere man. The corresponding force which he attracts and calls into play here and there becomes created entities, begging for life and claiming the right to live. Tell me, what is the duty of the giver of this life...Must he allow free scope to the play of sympathy, or must he ruthlessly set to work to destroy the hope of light which he bids spring up in a human soul?
>
> --Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound

I. Writing the Self-Nation

Nearly five decades elapse between the appearance of Hayford's Ethiopia Unbound and Nkrumah's Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah (1957). In Ghana is retold the story of another seminal nationalist figure who, emerging from the ranks of an African middle class, is able to pose challenging questions of its modernist

situation and therewith to articulate its historical tasks and possibilities in a style that radically departs from that of his predecessors. The title of Nkrumah's work alone--and we should keep in mind that its appearance was timed to coincide with Ghana's independence--points to an autobiography imagined in the classic mode of communal narrativity which we have earlier identified as a recurrent feature of the nationalist writing of African modernity.[1]

Like Ethiopia Unbound before it, then, Ghana is another example of a middle class narrative in which the story of the self-as-part, or the design of autobiography, seeks its subsumption within the story of the self-as-whole, or the design of national allegory. Of the two works, however, it is the latter that urges itself on us as a successful reconciliation of part and whole. The reasons are historical. As we saw in the previous chapter, Hayford's earlier effort in Ethiopia Unbound was calculated to produce a form of nationalist address that was visionary and boldly prospective. However, emanating as it did from the leader's politically and existentially uncertain situation in the heyday of colonial power, what we get in this work also--judging by the melange of literary forms that make it up--is a hesitant and groping narrative: the self-as-whole proves elusive. Nkrumah's Ghana, on the contrary, is historically fated to appear under the sign of nationalism's imminent victory over the forces of colonialism. Hence its mode of being is more resolutive, admitting of the closure of story in the round. Nine or so years of consummate politicking by the latter nationalist leader--falling between 1948-1957--

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[1] As in Appiah's observation, the African writer asks not "who am I"? but "who are we"? This displacing of the writing self into an imagined community and the writing into a mode of communal ownership is what the title of Nkrumah's autobiography is all about.

assures him the benefit of historical hindsight, and hence a full-bodied story, the very element of fulfilment denied his predecessor. Ending on the eve of the Ghanaian nation's independence from colonial rule, the first in black Africa, Nkrumah's autobiography could and does assume its epochal significance.

For this reason, autobiography functions in Ghana in a mode that retrospectively justifies the life: it is designed to yield a full-bodied (hi)story wherein the nationalist leader's life over time is narrativized into a meaningful, allegorical congruence with the birth of the nation-state Ghana. And, beyond this, the conditions that make for a holistic fit between the individual life and the pattern of nationalist meaning must also at once appear in, and disappear into, an expansive logic. Nkrumah writes: "I have never regarded the struggle for the Independence of the Gold Coast as an isolated objective but always as part of a world historical pattern" (G, 290). Thus if the life (the subjective "I") is presented as being strictly subordinated to a national will (the collective subject of "'Our' struggle"), the self-nation (or the "I-We"), whose narrative the autobiography constitutes, also appears as an allegorical sub-formation falling within, and subject to, another, larger holistic narrative logic. In Nkrumah's dialectic, the particular self-nation of Ghana is projected as an entity which seeks out and finds its necessity or rationality in a world historical (or universal) national-allegorical pattern.[2]

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[2] Nation, as Anderson observes, is both a universal and particular mode of subjection, a narrative into which each and everyone is or desires to be inserted. This is what he implies when he points out the paradox of the "formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept--in the modern world everyone can, should, will 'have' a nationality, as he or she 'has' a gender--vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations [or] nationality...sui generis." See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 14.

Nkrumah's autobiographical performance--the writing or narrative constitution of the self-nation--then, is posited within a world historical logic which, if it is "given," is certainly not appropriated without struggle. On the contrary, the singular self-nation appears as a possibility which, in and out of a colonial time, is to be wrested, recuperated, in heroic, "Promethean" terms. Such an observation falls into place in Nkrumah's avowed preparedness to "go through hell itself" in order--to quote Joyce's Stephen Dedalus--"to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race."[3]

In just such terms is the self-presentation of the leader proposed in Ghana. The autobiographical gesture nominates him as a mediating self--an organic catalyst, to use Gramsci's phrase--in a struggle aimed at creatively reconciling a formal universal, nation, with a local initiative and meaning. Hence Nkrumah, the native son, having successfully discharged this medial role in and for his time, permits himself to project in and through his self-presentation the emergent figure of his nation, qua a nation that has managed, or will soon manage, to pour a unique formal content, its own, into a world historical mould. The perception fostered by the autobiographical gesture, therefore, is that Nkrumah "is" and completes Ghana, a Ghana meaningful because it is possessed of a worldly formal content.

We need to also add that, much in the same manner in which we saw Hayford envisioning the middle class dialectic, Nkrumah's Ghana had to be, had to have a worldly meaning, in order that his (class) identity might find its completion. To this

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[3] See James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960) 253.

desire by an African middle class to take the full measure of its nationalist identity in the world Nkrumah brings a radical interpretation, evident in his disagreement with his mentor, the renowned early-century African internationalist, Kwegyir Aggrey. Aggrey's understanding of middle class worldliness called for unconditional cooperation between the black and white races. Against the call for "Africa for the Africans," a position especially identified at the time with Marcus Garvey, he had observed in a famous dictum: "You can play a tune of sorts on the white keys, and you can play a tune of sorts on the black keys, but for harmony you must use both the black and the white." To this Nkrumah responds: "only a free and independent people--a people with a government of their own--can claim equality, racial or otherwise, with another people" (G, 14). Looked at in its worldly aspect, then, Nkrumah's dream of independence, as exemplified by his comments here and elsewhere in the autobiography, is shaped within a powerful desire to make an African middle class, a colonial class-for-power, attain to its worldly identification in what we might call competitive equivalence.

Going by the leader's argument, we might grasp competitive equivalence in terms of the principle that only in a more or less perfectly competitive--i. e., equal--world is cooperation of the kind desired by Aggrey enjoined between nations, thus making for a truly international world. This, it must be supposed, is the sense contained in Fanon's argument to the effect that: "It is at the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows."[4] For Fanon, as for Nkrumah, the international dimension--a morality of global cooperation--begins from and terminates in national self-

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[4]. See Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1968) 247-248.

consciousness. True national consciousness then is that which has adapted itself to the worldly demand of competitive equivalence. If so, being one of the ruling "ideologemes" of the middle class allegory of nation, competitive equivalence compels us to pursue the further implication that the autobiographical composite of self and nation in Ghana is posited as standing at the end of one pattern of history, the unequal time of the colonial, and withal at the beginning of another, the projected equal time of the nation. The middle class self-nation, having wrested its own necessity from the "hell" of colonial time, is thus one that is poised to divert the latter into the promise of a "new Jerusalem." Thus the self-nation in Ghana is imagined in a time when it will have freely reshaped in its singular image, according to its own competitive design, the mould of the world historical. And, as we shall see, for Nkrumah the rationality of the world historical is embodied in the modern State, that very institution which had given itself first in the negative guise of the colonial.

That image of nation as a new Jerusalem appears in Nkrumah's last sermon in America, a sermon whose prophetic theme, as the autobiography recalls, was "I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth" (G, 166). The future leader, it is obvious, was not averse to speaking in figure. Hence we may follow suit and suggest--as, for instance, Padmore does in his "hagiography" of Nkrumah, The Gold Coast Revolution[5]--that, in Ghana, Nkrumah's self-presentation is that of the middle class logos, Hayford's "Ethiopia," epochally made flesh. As we saw in Chapter 2, the credit for the popularization of

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[5] Padmore concludes that "in many respects Mr. Casely Hayford was a sort of John the Baptist, preparing the way for younger nationalist figures like Kwame Nkrumah." Even though Padmore does not make the equation explicit, it is obvious that he means Nkrumah to be "Christ" to Hayford's "John the Baptist." See George Padmore, The Gold Coast Revolution (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1953) 52.

"Ghana" may go to Nkrumah's nationalist contemporary J.B. Danquah, but the latter's gesture, fixated on pastness, was in many respects that of an empty epic formalism. Nkrumah's "Ghana," on the other hand, shown in its actualization on the ground, reveals its meaning in the epic content of its own present, the future-oriented present of struggle.[6]

In writing the nation, then, Nkrumah presents himself in the aspect of the fulfilling middle class complement. This gesture nominates and confirms him as the one representative of the many. He is the leader who, bridging different orders of time and space, the local and the universal, transforms the otherwise "empty" colonial duration of the Gold Coast into the meaningful advent of a Ghanaian secular modernity. Making the motions of time and figure in the leader's life over time intelligible this way allows us to see why his autobiography insists on bearing the exemplary title it does.

Ghana offers an account of Nkrumah's life from 1909 (or 1913), when he was born, to 1957, when we have a final image of him at the threshold of Independence preparing to assume the stewardship of a new nation-state of Ghana. The autobiography of the leader begins by recounting in selective detail the events of his early life as a growing boy in his native Nzima, on the southwestern flank of the Gold Coast colony. We may locate here, in Nkrumah's brief but lovingly executed detail of a "simple" Nzima-land (as he himself refers to it), the formative elements that will make for the

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[6] Nkrumah will declare in the Legislative Assembly Debates of 18 May 1956: "we take pride in the name [Ghana], not out of romanticism but as an inspiration for the future." See David Kimble, Introduction, in A Political History of Ghana (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1963) xviii.

emergence of the future "man of the people." Receiving an honorary degree from his alma mater in America in 1953, at a time when he had become the first native and black "Leader of Government Business" in an African colony, Nkrumah will display a self-consciousness about his humble origins in the following observation: "Truly...it is not the heights to which a man climbs that matter, but the depths from whence he came" (G, 163).

If anything, that comes as an emphatic reminder to his reader that Ghana is the story of a man who, unlike Hayford and Danquah, was not a scion of the merchant and traditional "aristocracy" of the Gold Coast. To this group belonged an elite of men, mostly lawyers, for whom nationalism had been an exclusive preserve for the longest period. On the contrary, rising, so to speak, out of the literal and metaphoric "depths"--Nkrumah's father was an unlettered rural goldsmith and his mother had no formal schooling either--the autobiography bespeaks the extraordinary story of a self-described "very ordinary looking African" (G, 122).

If, however, the "handicap" of ordinariness accompanies Nkrumah's first appearance on the flank of an increasingly impotent Gold Coast nationalism, in the end he comes out as the heroic figure who puts his "handicap" to positive advantage, utilizing it to overcome the retrograde elitism of the nationalism of the few. This he does by objectifying and renewing in his person nationalism's promissory narrative of collective emancipation. As his story unfolds we will encounter the nationalist of the many, the charismatic awakener of the masses, the man of the people who takes over a flagging

nationalist praxis and kindles it into assuming a historic shape equal to its vaunted ideological content.

This, then, is the substance of the heroic story whose retelling begins with the sights, scenes and experiences of Nkrumah's early life. The details of the opening pages quickly shade off into Nkrumah's experiences as a youthful student at Achimota School, then the elite institution of the Colony. We learn of his encounter with the influential and widely admired educationist and internationalist Kwegyir Aggrey. Acting as an early role model for the future leader, Aggrey, we are told, fired in the future leader a determination to study in America. That wish will be put to the execution soon after Nkrumah graduated as a teacher from Achimota in 1930. Five years after graduating, wish becomes reality when after ceaseless exertions on his own behalf Nkrumah is accepted to study at the Lincoln Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania.

An account of Nkrumah's ten-year sojourn as a student in America follows. These are years in which he suffers material hardship, but they will be justified retrospectively in Promethean terms by him:

> Just as in the days of the Egyptians, so to-day God had ordained that certain among the African race should journey westwards to equip themselves with knowledge and experience for the day when they will be called upon to return to their motherland and to use the learning they had acquired to help improve the lot of their brethren (G, 166).

America marks the high point of the tutelary phase of Nkrumah's life. As the Ghanaian writer and commentator Awoonor points out, those ten years stamp him decisively as a product of post-Depression American liberal intellectualism. The names that feature prominently in his intellectual formation, however, will have to include not only such

Americans as Jefferson, Paine and Lincoln but also Marx, Engels and Lenin. Ultimately, in Awoonor's words, it will be with "tools from creeds as diverse as Marxism, Jeffersonian democracy and Gandhian non-violence [that Nkrumah will begin] an incredible stripdown of Britain's African empire."[7]

After America, Nkrumah spends two politically active years in England before his return to the Gold Coast. England marks the intensification of the activist-political phase of his life, a phase where we see the future leader striving to engage thought with practice. The practical successes he chalks in this short period include his initiating a Coloured Workers' Association of Great Britain; and, with the active cooperation of a dedicated cadre of students, the formation of a proto-nationalist organization, the West African National Secretariat. The latter, conceived in part as a vanguard liberation movement, will serve at this time as a political clearing house where affairs of vital concern to (West) African nationalism came up for debate. Nkrumah also mentions his association at the time "with all parties ranging from the extreme right to the extreme left," learning about such techniques of organization as would "help me in organizing my own nationalist party on the best possible lines when I eventually returned to my country" (G, 80).

Thus the Nkrumah who returns to the Gold Coast from England in 1947 leaves with valuable knowledge about modes and techniques of socio-political organization and representation. The experience gained will make the difference when the time came for Nkrumah to wrest the mantle of nationalist leadership from an organizationally defective

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[7] Kofi Awoonor, "Africa's Literature Beyond Politics," Worldview (March 1972): 23.

and politically ineffective United Gold Coast Convention, the then elite vanguard of Gold Coast nationalism. This organization, which invited Nkrumah to become its general secretary in the first place, did so, we are told, because it was "faced with the problem of how to reconcile the leadership of the intelligentsia with the broad masses of the people" (G, 61). "It was in an effort to make [the U.G.C.C.] appear a popular movement," Nkrumah informs us further, "that I was invited to become its general secretary" (G, 69). Yet the U.G.C.C. was led by men whose political philosophy Nkrumah saw as "contrary to the political aspirations of the Gold Coast" (G, 62). Hence, the inevitable differences between his radical populist style and the more sedate, laidback politics of the other leaders of the organization provokes a split that leads to the formation of Nkrumah's own Convention People's Party (C.P.P.).

What the autobiography furnishes subsequently are the quotidian details of political engagement--constitutional wrangles, strike actions, mass boycotts, Party rallies, and so on--those details of the anti-colonial struggle that have passed into the stuff of history and legend. The Nkrumah of this stage is the nationalist leader remembered for his ability to effectively mobilize the masses of the people; the man whose agitprop--disseminated through the newspaper and fiery public speaking--popularizes such catchwords as "Freedom!," "Positive Action," "Tactical Action," and other such slogans of popular mobilization. With these grand propagandist themes the leader will conduct the great task of reorganizing a Gold Coast social narrativity, imparting a teleological solidity to a dream of collective emancipation otherwise confined to a dead end within the moribund exclusivism of elite nationalism.

Consider, then, the moment when Nkrumah breaks away from the U.G.C.C., over the latter's footdragging on the independence question, to form the C.P.P. as the reformed vanguard platform for the campaign for "self-government now!" The autobiographical recall of the occasion and events of Sunday, 12th June, 1949, at the Arena, Accra, presents the paradigmatic moment of the leader's linkage[8] with "the people," the "sixty thousand" who had gathered to hear him speak:

> "May I," I asked them, "in the present stage of our political struggle, pack my things and leave this dear Ghana of ours?"
> "No! No! Certainly not!" yelled the crowd indignantly.
> "Or may I remain here and keep my mouth shut?"
> "No! No! Speak! Stay and open your mouth!" they cried.
> "Then may I break away from any leadership which is faltering and quailing before imperialism and colonialism and throw in my lot with the chiefs and people of this country for full self-government NOW?"
> The unanimous shout of approval from that packed Arena was all that I needed to give me my final spur. I was confident that whatever happened, I had the full support of the people.
> ....We had decided to take our future into our own hands and I am sure that in those few minutes everyone became suddenly conscious of the burden we had undertaken. But in the faces before me I could see no regret or doubt, only resolution (G, 104-105).

Thus "a people" capable of, and committed to, making history, their own, appear at the instigation of a leader who exhorts them: "The time has arrived...when a definite line of action must be taken if we are going to save our country..." (G, 103).

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[8] I take "moment of linkage" from Lentricchia's work--itself an extended footnote of Kenneth Burke's writings--on ideology and hegemony in the domain of social representation. According to Lentricchia/Burke, "form" (read Nkrumah), in the moment of hegemonic "linkage": "would seize and direct ideological substance, transform it into power over the subject audience; it would turn ideology over to disciplinary intention, that would utilize and subjugate...The...moment of linkage, then, is the manipulative moment at which the subject-audience is submitted ("subjected") to the productive force of ideology." See Frank Lentricchia, Criticism and Social Change (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983) 104.

If the autobiographical Nkrumah emerges as one of the people's own, it is an Nkrumah who has become so to the extent that he has succeeded in taking the ideology of nationalism out of the ranks of a middle class and given it renewed articulation within the felt but as yet "formless" desires--the "uncreated conscience"--of a broad-based popular-social narrativity. Nkrumah is the hero who invests this social domain of narrative with a teleological solidity. He is embodied as such in his dramatic ability, as we have seen, to represent his person as the only rationally desirable symbol of this narrative's authority; an authoring and authorizing symbol that, in turn, is able to represent to peoples and groups sharing a common fate of colonial degradation their collective, heroic characterization in what appears to be the only narrative rationally possible for their time.

This is the timely essence contained in the leader's rallying "freedom!" and "self-government NOW!," the latter being the slogan he opposes to his opponents' disembodied and feeble "self-government as soon as possible." These opponents, we are given to see, are of the same order as those nationalist literati denounced by Nkrumah during his London days as "idealists contenting themselves with writing theses but quite unable or unwilling to take any active part in the African problem" (G, 53). Drawing on the autobiography's mode of existing as a full-bodied sign of successful political and social adventure,[9] we might say that its movements signal the consummation of the mimetic contract of the middle class allegory of nation beyond the latter's mere

[9] The idea of adventure, risk and hazard is captured by Nkrumah notably in the following: "In all political struggles... there come rare moments, hard to distinguish but fatal to let slip, when all must be set upon a hazard, and out of the simple man is ordained strength" (G 104).

idealization. Here, Ghana seems to say, is a presentation of the mimetic contract that finally escapes the confines of the merely "literary"--the domain of its previous enactments--and enters, with the advent of Ghana, a properly social domain of performance.

Hence, as autobiography gives us a privileged inside view of the tireless and astute political organizer embarked on a renewed performance of the mimetic contract, we are encountering also, compared with Hayford and others, a figure who is more than a "thinker": Ghana presents a social "doer" in whom as such secular advent is given symbolic inscription. In the name of Nkrumah, then, the communally diffuse and colonially repressed elements of emancipatory desire in the social narrativity of the Gold Coast[10]--elements which for the reason that they are repressed must be considered latent, "below" the "surface"--these elements are concentrated and refashioned into the content of a palpable manifest destiny. This, as we see from the second epigraph to the chapter, was the creative elan that Hayford sought charismatically to embody. We must acknowledge though that it is Nkrumah who gives this creative force its most vigorous expression in the annals of African nationalism. For Nkrumah understood what Hayford

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[10] In Armah's first novel, he puts his finger on this quality of Nkrumah by making a character worshipfully say of the leader and awakener: "How can a man born of woman tell me my thoughts even before I know them? I ask you how can he?" See Ayi Kwei Armah, The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born (London: Heinemann, 1969) 87. The element of hero worship also appears in a little vignette in Ghana about a woman who renames herself Ama Nkrumah (Ama is the feminine form of Kwame). At a rally, we are told, this woman slashes her face with a blade and "smearing the blood all over her body," she challenges the men present "to do likewise in order to show that no sacrifice was too great in their united struggle for freedom and independence" (G, 109). The secular apotheosis of the leader is also very much in evidence in Party loyalist Krobo Edusei's admiration for the man. After Nkrumah fails to honour a mass rally of the C.P.P. in Kumasi, Edusei is reported to have said: "Tell me, Kwame -- what sort of man are you?...There was something sadly lacking [at the rally]. When you are there it makes so much difference both to the crowds and to us...But one should not wonder at that...for after all Kwame Nkrumah is the C.P.P. and the C.P.P. is Kwame Nkrumah (G, 271).

did not quite come to understand: that "a middle class elite without the battering ram of the illiterate masses, can never hope to smash the forces of colonialism" (G, 215).[11]

Nkrumah having acquired the "battering ram" of the "masses," he brings more than a supposition, then, of his being the bearer of the manifest destiny merely of a middle class to his address before the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly in 1953. This is the occasion when he moves his historic "Motion of Destiny" (a portion of which provides the first epigraph to this chapter). "My independence motion," as he refers to it, is therefore made on behalf a "united people."

Yet, if the "Motion of Destiny" speech is couched in the idiom of popular demand, this demand, taking place in the Legislative Assembly, is still framed by the institution of the colonial state. Nkrumahist nationalism was in effect beholden to the imperative of étatisme or state ideology. What this means is that if the teleological solidity conferred on a Gold Coast social narrativity by the leader had made the destiny of a middle class manifest as a popular destiny and vice versa, this destiny was also manifest as one inevitably approaching its consummation in étatisme.

It is to the political analyst Partha Chatterjee's elaboration of étatisme in a discussion of Nehru in the context of Indian nationalism that we will now turn to shed some light on Nkrumah's situation in the Gold Coast. Like Nkrumah's, Nehru's reconstruction of Indian nationalist ideology was one whose "specific form was to situate nationalism within the domain of state ideology." In either case this was because the

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[11] Hence this assessment of the two leaders given by Padmore: "Unlike men of the type of Gandhi and Nehru and Kwame Nkrumah, [Casely Hayford] failed to realize that without the active support of the plebeian massses...who form the bulk of the population, the middle class intellectuals were ineffective." The Gold Coast Revolution 52.

historical constraints imposed by the colonial social formation on an emergent middle class were such that:

> its intellectual-moral leadership could never be firmly established in the domain of civil society. Of historical necessity, its revolution had to be passive. The specific ideological form of the passive revolution ...was an étatisme, explicitly recognizing a central, autonomous and directing role of the state and legitimizing it by a specifically nationalist marriage between the ideas of progress and social justice.[12]

Chatterjee's insights into the colonial problem of social representation--the question of intellectual-moral leadership broaches the question of hegemony--supplies lessons for understanding what a modernist native class-for-power had to confront in a pre-independence Gold Coast. As in other African colonies, the "natural" discontinuities within the Gold Coast--discontinuities primarily of ethnicity--for strategic reasons, had been confirmed and reinforced by the contrivances of colonial power. What used pre-colonially to be the flexible social spaces of the Gold Coast had, over colonial time, hardened into quite differentiated "civil societies." For the natives of the colony, of course, these were spaces hardly integrated one in another--whether politically, or economically, or culturally--in any salutary fashion. Given the circumstance of this enforced and uneven plurality--uneven even in the sameness of colonial duration--by the time Nkrumah appeared on the stage of Gold Coast nationalism, the real nativity that we saw Hayford pursuing in Ethiopia Unbound was one whose Fanti-Akan parochialism could seem to have exhausted itself. Hayford's propositions, it was apparent, were no longer able to provide the terms that would adequately represent the diverse panorama

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[12] Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World (London: Zed Books, 1986) 132.

of peoples in a Gold Coast comprised of the Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and Trans-Volta Togoland. It is for this reason that in the sections following, my reading of the autobiography will attempt to account for an Nkrumah who is compelled to leave a pure ethnos--Hayford's ideal order of a real nativity--(partially) behind; an Nkrumah therefore who, reaching for Ghana in étatiste terms, is able to invest the ideology of state in a different ethos of nativity. As the symbol authorizing étatisme, I see Nkrumah, among other things, as standing at the inception of a virtual nativity. Far from the theogony of Hayford, the Nkrumahist State is dreamed in terms of a secular cosmogony whose rationale is the invention of a people who are spatially, rather than lineally, one. That, and only that, is the basis of the brave new world rhetoric of the leader: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and all things shall be added unto you" (G, 164). These are words spoken by one hopeful of post-colonially mending into a lateral continuity a popular socioscape that has been fractured by colonial power. I will return to this theme in the final section of this chapter.

II. Autobiography as a Fulfilling Reflex of a Gold Coast Social Narrativity: Inventing a Pre-text for Ghana

For now in what follows I will attempt to give a probabilistic account of Nkrumah's autobiography as a "writing back" to the theocratic essentialism of Ethiopia Unbound. It will be a reading of the moment of Ghana, then, as a revisionist one, a moment where the national(ist) allegory is negotiated away from a spiritual towards a secular coding. I will give myself here the large freedom of reading Nkrumah's first

chapter back into an inchoate social narrativity, giving a sense of how its tropes and figures of desire are given shape within and in terms of a native setting in a colonialist modernity. I will, in other words, be inventing the first chapter as a narrative pre-text from which Ghana detaches itself as the condition of its own possibility; a pre-text whose claims on the autobiography Ghana negotiates and advances; a pre-text to which it finally circles back as a fulfilment of its own precondition. It should be apparent by now that in saying this I am also instituting this pre-text as a sub-text, a kind of "unconscious," that accompanies Nkrumah's autobiographical narrative over the range of its performances. I hope to show, in retrieving this "unconscious," how the theme and structure of a virtual nativity are already implicitly contained in the inaugural movements of narrative in Ghana.

I begin, then, from the beginning, with the account Nkrumah gives of his birth and early childhood in the setting of Nzima-land. About Nzima, where he was born at an uncertain date (either 1909 or 1913), he informs us: "time did not count in those peaceful communities" (G, 1). Strictly speaking this is not accurate. We may infer, rather, that what the autobiographer means is that timekeeping in the Western sense went unremarked for the reason that the space of a domestic nativity was already accounted for in an order of temporality that was all its own. Nevertheless, even here a Western time scheme was on the ascendent. The inception of this time scheme, as Nkrumah recounts it, went back to when Nzima had been "discovered" by Europeans and christened "Appollonia because it was on the feast day of St Apollo that the white man first set foot in Nzima Land" (G, 1). Having been inserted into Christendom, an Nzima

locality had more and more become subject to the influential chronometry sponsored by Anno Domini. And if anything, a colonial power in the land was hastening this process.

From the manner in which Nkrumah recalls the Nzima of his birth, then, we may deduce that the unequal meeting of two temporalities--one forceful if only because the other was "peaceful"--had ensured that, in (chronological) time, the economic imperatives of an invasive Western modernity and its discursive and political supports had come to lie heavily athwart his homeland. This process had fractured Nzima and inserted it into a framework of multiple, unevenly overlapping spaces. For instance, as Nkrumah recounts--perhaps with understated heat--his native land had, of a necessity, to confront a colonial reality daily in the fact that, not only was it yoked with other ethnic groups by colonial diktat, but it was also forcibly divided. One part of it belonged to the British Gold Coast and the other to the French Ivory Coast. Nzima had also sustained a sundering within, between an "informal" sector of traditional observances and a "formal," modern sector to which, complexly, belonged another tradition, that of the "priest who... baptised me into the Roman Catholic Church [and] recorded my birth date as 21st September, 1909" (G 1).

Local knowledges were still operative in Nzima at the time of the future leader's birth; nevertheless, even for Nkrumah's unlettered mother who had been weaned on these knowledges, the shape of her son's life seemed to lie beyond a pure locality, and more in a location in-between, a location angled in the direction of the exogenous modern school. We are told: "Although my mother had never had the benefit of a formal

education herself, she was determined that I should be sent to school at the earliest opportunity" (G, 10).

We may produce the "commonsense" at the basis of a mother's decision as the intuitive grasp by an Nzima nativity of its existence in a virtual alignment of plural worlds. There was its own world which, falling under the dispensation of a colonialist modernity, was articulated with that of worlds other than its own; and if the tag of Gold Coasters borne by the natives of Nzima meant anything at all, it meant that an impinging power had compelled the natives both of Nzima and beyond to partially concede a recognition of Self within the powerful presence, real and symbolic, of the Anglo-British Other. Uneven though a colonial structure made this alignment of worlds appear, the transverse relationships the colonial encounter had created could yield a dream--as is obscurely manifest in the wish of an unlettered mother--of a potential link that will "thread" or "suture" into ideal proportion these different times and spaces.

It is in just such a manner that Nkrumah, in his intellectual and political formation, will appear in Ghana. Hence we might grasp his career as a confirmation of the covenant of a native mother. Madam Nyaniba, Nkrumah's mother--the autobiography is dedicated to her--and others like her had to have been staking their faith on their native sons and daughters being able to find in and through the school a rigorous formulation with which to materialize that sense of worldliness which, for her untutored generation, could only have remained on the level of intuitive commonsense.

A folk anecdote that Nkrumah recounts as he sketches his early years "justifies" a mother's commonsensical yearnings on behalf of her son and opens a preliminary

window for us onto the issues that will animate the life over time represented in Ghana. In August of 1913, we are told, a cargo ship, the Bakana, had run aground off the Nzima coast and its captain had perished. Those are the facts. The English vessel's accident, however, is transformed by the Nzima folk imaginary into a consequential story of heroic appropriation. In the fantastic version circulating among the Nzima, it is the god of a local river who, wishing to visit his goddess in a neighbouring river, had engineered the shipwreck so that he would have a boat at his command for his middle passage. That a domestic god-figure would feel the need to seize, on his own behalf and for his own purposes, a man-made object, an instrument, moreover, that was the metonym, the technological emblem par exellence, of the global power of turn of the century Europe, must surely speak volumes.

Reading the "political unconscious" of this folk anecdote puts us in a position to see a locality that was already groping towards a model of empowering reconciliation with a universality which at this time, willy nilly, bore the powerful imprint of Europe. And it would seem that this reconciliation had to want to find its way through the vessel of a global European modernity, a symbol whose local manifestation was not only the disproportionately powerful colonial state but also, as presented in a mother's wish for her native son, the technics conferred by the seductive new school.

And yet, if this is the case, we are also required, complementarily, to see the ongoing negotiation captured in a folk anecdote not simply as an act of African domesticity paying homage to the puissant universality of Europe. Hardly. Rather, the parable of the local god who commandeers the European ship requires us to envision, in

a thematics of secular emergence, an African nativity's abrogation of the vessel of a Eurocentric universality for its local self-expression.

It is here, then, in a virtuality to be aspired towards, that the heroics of the autobiographical gesture in Ghana must be sought. The requirement imposed on the hero, ultimately, is to refigure the domestic space of the Gold Coast and to chart its singular insertion into the motions of a universal history. From a land outside time--as Hegel once remarked of Africa and which Nkrumah curiously seems to confirm ("time did not count" in pristine Nzima, he tells us)--a representative native figure is enjoined to descend into a temporal dialectic in order to remake himself into the agent of historical eventuation. It is only thus that he stood to be able, so to speak, to shape the demise of the colonial captain and, seizing the vessel of colonialist design, foresee a reconstituted and self-actuating nativity. What could the conceit of a god whose trysts with his goddess have to be mediated by the profane artefact of a European modernity mean but this?

This is the implication carried in the first epigraph of this chapter: an Nkrumahist nativity which, virtually renewing itself in and beyond Europe's terms, would produce a self-nation in a historical modernity that still kept faith with its own nature. In the circumstances, the universal will have been given a new meaning much rather as, in the process of extending itself into this universality, a new nativity will have been born. It is such a virtual coding, therefore, that we must give the tale of an African godhead--sign of the pure originality and the perfect self-identity of a pristine nativity, outside time, as we saw in Ethiopia Unbound--that has felt the need to descend from a lofty position of absolute figurality in order to enter the motions of secular allegory.

The point of reading the conceit contained in the folk anecdote the way I have done is because the insights it offers are transposable into a reading of Nkrumah's autobiographical performance. In the light of these insights, we might bring more than a literal consideration, then, to this detail the leader gives about his birth: "I am told," he tells us, "that...I apparently took so long to show any signs of life that my mother had lost all interest in me as she believed me to be dead" (G, 3). Could there be the merest hint of an invitation to us to rescue from this detail the additional conceit of a nativity hesitating to keep a tryst in "impure" time with the feminine mother-figure? Perhaps not. Still, if we bear in mind the tale of a god who has perforce to descend to earth to negotiate a middle passage in order to reach his goddess, may we not discern here the conceit of a nativity seeking to re-encounter its originality--symbolized by the principle of the mother--in altered circumstances? Could Nkrumah's primordially lifeless body then be the sign of a native sphere that remains bodily mute because it is consigned to a powerless ideality? That is, until he--like the god-figure who, in changed circumstances, must renew his trysts and keep faith with his goddess--is forced into the motions of secular allegory? Nkrumah continues: "my female relatives...were determined to put life into me [and after much effort] they finally succeeded in arousing my interest and...handed me back to my mother..." (G, 4). It would seem that in the humanized and relative time of secular allegory, the native logos, the pure but inert vocable, seeking to re-encounter itself in renewal, is enjoined to condescend to suffer the profanity of being made flesh.

We will find such a sense of renewal-in-relativity (and vice versa) accompanying the attempt by Nkrumah to fix a beginning precisely for himself in addition to and beyond the Nzima calendric system which, as he informs us, his mother falls back on to calculate his age. Beginning--originality--here appears through the mediation of the shipwrecked English vessel and the tombstone of its dead captain, two landmarks of Western timekeeping which provide the means for Nkrumah to mark with relative precision his own date of birth in his opening chapter.

As it turns out, ship and captain will return once more as the autobiographer's concluding images. Anticipating this conclusion, I observe inaugurally here that the leader's signifying of autobiographical beginning and end upon these images is not fortuitous: between and through the modernist resonances of the images of ship and captain, Nkrumah will have shown us an ideopraxis based self-consciously on renewal-in-relativity. Hence, as the conclusion will show us, what underwrites Nkrumah's self-nomination as autobiographical hero is a certain modality of recuperating the modern for Africa: in Ghana, in other words, we encounter an Nkrumahist stylization of an African modernity. In the end what we have is a portrait of a man who has been able to seize and put to work on his behalf those conjunctural opportunities given by a colonialist-modernist dispensation, the very ones that Hayford before him had intuited but could only ineffectually gesture at.

"The essence of politics is the realization of what is possible" (G, 193), observes Nkrumah, and we may assume that these words are spoken as a corrective to an earlier nationalist praxis. This characterization of the realpolitical as a working with(in) and

towards the virtual--i. e. "possible"--marks the distance between Nkrumah's style of self-fashioning and Hayford's. If, on the one hand, we have a Hayfordian nationalism that hampers and constrains itself in the pursuit of a conservative nativism, on the other, the populist Nkrumah presents a radical, post-nativist style of politics which pragmatically wills its self-constitution in what is given, which makes do with what is available. The difference between the two leaders is that between the hierophant, ineffective for being walled up in an idealized native past, and the present-minded communicant, (partially) successful for being able to invest the middle class logos in a consensual national community. I dwell on this theme at some length in the section following.

III. Going Through the Logic of Colonial Fracture

Writing in an earlier phase of nationalism, Hayford, as we have seen, projects the successful institution of a normative bond between himself and a popular nativity in terms of the middle class intellectual's active recherche du temps perdu. Hence we discover, in Ethiopia Unbound, his autobiographical alter ego standing in Kumasi (the capital of Ashanti), far from a coast "ravaged" by the Anglo-European intrusion, and imagining an inland preserve that answers his quest for an Ethiopian norm which he might come to embody. From an alienated gaze trained upon the town's inhabitants, he muses:

> [T]he men and women [of Ashanti] are not changed...It is easy to see that the men and women who walked the banks of the Nile in the days of yore are not far different from the remnants of the sons of Efua Kobi (i.e., Ashanti).

Hayford concludes therefore: "Thus you arrive at the heart of these people, and you are inwardly persuaded that all symbols of European authority, responsibility are more impermanent than the frail houses you see about you."[13]

While Hayfordian nationalism may cast itself ideally as speaking from within a popular nativity, its style of articulation nevertheless presents impressive problems. For monologic commentary like the kind we see above only contrives to leave a normative people in a silent, timeless order, preserved as the ahistorical signifier of an unblemished interiority. Hence when the citation concludes: "How to reach the heart of such a people would not be an uninteresting study...If you succeed, you have arrived at the heart of the principle which may be applied to healthy race development wheresoever necessary," we encounter something of the philosophical incoherence of the nativist intellectual. For how did you "develop"--i.e., articulate in an order of relativity--that which was confined in an absolute zone of mute ideality? And the ultimate question must surely be why it would be necessary to "develop," that is to say, alienate from itself, a state of purity presumed to be sufficient unto itself.

Hayford here, it goes without saying, articulates a characteristically conservative style of responding to that great question which has haunted all political activism down the ages: "what is to be done?" His manner of locking the solution of the problem into a radically conservative mode, though, is of the kind that Nkrumah's diagnosis in Ghana identifies with an elite nationalism hampered by its excessive intellectualism. Hence the latter leader's exasperation with those he accuses of being "idealists," men out of touch

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[13] Casely Hayford, Ethiopia Unbound (London: Phillips, 1911) 185-186.

with the "African problem." The question, as Nkrumah mounts the nationalist platform, then, is a post-nativist reformulation of what is to be done: how, that is to say, did one re-present the African problem beyond a conservative nativism? For the "African problem" needed a resolution, above all, in and as the pragmatic question of how a middle class could present an image of itself as a vanguard bearing the "dominant wish and aspiration" of "the people"; the "African problem" was how a class-for-power might construct a broad-based social force positioned solidly behind it in its contests with colonial authority.

Pursuing these questions I attempt, in what follows, to present in a comparative framework the ways in which the African problem shapes the self-presentations given by our two nationalist leaders, Hayford and Nkrumah, in their respective autobiographies. If "the people" are the basis upon which a middle class "Africanizes" (i. e., seeks to make itself into a representative class) its problem; if they must be factored into every attempt to surmount the colonial problem, the comparison of the two leaders offered here will be a way of assessing two competitive modes and styles of articulating "the people" with and within the "African problem."

Hayford's definition of "the people," as we have seen, is distinguished by its formulation in a nativism that we will take as fairly representative of the metaphysical idealism that Nkrumah critiques and rejects. In the latter's pragmatic, post-nativist idealism we see him bringing an understanding that shifts the constitution of the people away from the non-negotiable primordial basis the former gives it. What emerges is the

difference between Hayford's community of a real nativity, or people by descent; and Nkrumah's community of a virtual nativity, or people by consent.

Historically, if Hayford's monologue--as exemplified above--remains an unfulfilled homage to a pristine past, in Ghana Nkrumah will give us an alternative that begins with a homage to the future. We see this in an outstanding image of the future leader as he takes his leave of America. Gazing up at the celebrated Statue of Liberty "with her arm raised as if in personal farewell to me," and with his eyes misted over, Nkrumah declares to the Statue: "You have opened my eyes to the true meaning of liberty...I shall never rest until I have carried your message to Africa" (G, 48).

In that compact is captured the pragmatic idealism that Nkrumah will later inject into the anti-colonial struggle. For, unlike Hayford the unanimist, it is not the case for Nkrumah the pragmatist that all the symbols of European authority should be rejected out of hand. Rather, as the leader's self-fashioning in Ghana abundantly indicates, for an Africa looking towards a self-renewing posture in modernity, these are symbols that may be appropriated to refashion the norms of a viable political and cultural order.

To demonstrate the efficacy of Nkrumah's pragmatic idealism, Ghana gives us the testimony of an old man--an emblem of the past, if anything--who is moved by the leader's proclamation of a new order of post-colonial freedom--the compact of the future, if anything--at a C.P.P. rally. This rally, as it happens, takes place in Kumasi, the self-same Kumasi which Hayford preferred to be immured in an immemorial "tradition." We are told that the old man asks Nkrumah in amazement: "Do you mean that I can stand up in Kumasi and speak of the things you have just told us? All this in Ashanti?" To

which the leader responds in a tremendous display of reassurance: "Why not? You are the same as the rest of us. If you believe in freedom then you say so!" And the old man's final word is: "If the C.P.P. can do this for me--then FREEDOM!" (G, 222).

"You are the same as the rest of us": here monologue gives way to dialogue, a two way exchange in which Nkrumah is able to give a commonsense projection of a dream of symmetrical proportion to a colonially created "underclass." It is meaningful exchanges of this nature that enlist a new content on behalf of Hayford's historically ineffective call for "reciprocity." This call, as we saw in the last chapter, was meant to resound in the context of the struggle of the educated native middle class against the white colonial structure. We may not overlook the fact that it contains the important premise that, but for the accident of colonialism, the native intellectual and his white counterpart might share the same cultural (or class) identity after all. Hence Hayford shows us--and this point has been made previously--that the anti-colonial struggle begins in large measure as a confrontation between two colonial factions, both positioned in a structure of privilege, however asymmetrical this positioning. One faction, white, actually wielded power. The other was black, with a European education, and privileged as such. Nevertheless its position in the colonial structure was such that the actuality of power continued to elude it. The privileged constitution of an educated native middle class, therefore, took place over a space usurped by colonialism, a space which then returned to this class as the image of its intrinsic powerlessness.

If, in the circumstances, Gold Coast nationalism, with and after Hayford, is produced under the sign of a class-for-power, the inability to see the power struggle

through until Nkrumah must be accounted for by the failure of a native elite to rally the masses to its side. A first phase of nationalism, therefore, founders in large part because a middle class is unable to represent its interests to the people as the latter's own interest. All claims to the contrary, a nativity of "the people" could only remain an elitist abstraction in a contestatory nationalist discourse that nevertheless shrilly insisted that the only political reality was this people's priority. Until the moment of Nkrumah, then, a middle class politics confronts its failure to square the circle of the normative (or what I have called the "hermeneutic") and relative (or the "social") components of representation it had posited in the mimetic contract. Having excessively idealized nativity into a non-negotiable norm, Hayfordian nationalism, as it turned out, had compromised on a relativist definition of the political in a colonial setting.

If the real nativity of the nativist posited a norm that seemed to lie beyond politics, this claim was belied by an invasive colonial authority that kept ensuring that no space was sacrosanct and nothing remained immune to politics. For historically, colonial realpolitik dictated a capture of nativity itself. Hence, the nativist knowledge produced by the native intellectual quite simply played into the hands of a colonial state which, quickly, in the policies of Indirect Rule and Native Administration, used this knowledge to refashion the spaces of the native ethnos in accordance with its models of power, command and obedience. The colonial establishment had in effect helped in the "invention and dignification of Tradition."[14] This process empowered enormously an elite

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[14] The phrase is A. F. Robertson's. See his "Anthropology and Government in Ghana" African Affairs 74.294 (Jan. 1975): 54. See also Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds. The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1983).

of traditional rulers who were then available to be used as a bulwark against the threat to the white colonial power structure represented by the more or less Europeanized black middle class.[15] The political tactic of divide and rule was nothing new to colonial power.

The invention of tradition in the Gold Coast had produced a colonial citizenry caught between two mutually reinforcing spheres of oppressive exaction: a formal state and its colonized "customary" counterpart of "civil society." Thus the logic of fracture by which colonial power reproduced its authority; and it is here, within an order submitted to colonial necessity, that Nkrumah's logic of freedom will seek the modalities of its expression. For if the apparatuses of colonial power had divided the social spaces of the Gold Coast it had also potentially--i.e., virtually--made them the "same" since they were subjected "equally" to the burden of its exactions. Hence when Nkrumah tells the old man "You are the same as the rest of us," he is using a language that seductively "threads" its way through the oppressive logic of colonial fracture,[16] to emerge on its utopian other side, into the time of a national modernity, a time foreshadowed as such by the colonial presence itself. That future utopia draws its authority from, and insinuates itself into, a dream of a common language, a language of freedom, popular accountability and social justice, to which all will come as equal communicants irrespective of lineal

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[15] Hayford's own bitter quarrel with Nana Sir Ofori Atta, a traditional ruler, over who is naturally qualified to represent the peoples of the Gold Coast is a case in point. If it rehearsed an old argument about representation, this time it was between a traditional ruling elite and an educated native middle class. Through an astute act of machiavellian cunning, the argument had been conducted away from one involving black colonials and a white Administration to one involving black skins.

[16] We can understand the logic thus, in the "voice" of a hypothetical colonial apologist: "by and through our actions we know you are potentially one people; but we have to divide you internally into the Many--representing this as that which you were originally--so that you can serve the purposes of the One, the imperium whose interests we conduct through and manifestly embody in the localized colonial state."

and ethnocultural descent. Only in the originality of this conception could the worlds beyond Nkrumah's native Nzima merge into each other and into the dream of Ghana, an African nation among equal nations.

A landmark shipwreck and a tombstone: when Nkrumah informs his reader in his opening chapter that these are his aids in ascertaining the date of his birth, we are given a sense of a beginning which he can grasp only relatively. We might extend this reading into a metaphor of an autobiographical performance in which his own originality appears as the timely and virtual appropriation, phoenix-like, of a self-nation from a perspective fixed in the demise of the English captain and the chronometry that marks his death as a meaningful event. In this acknowledgement of a trace of otherness on his beginnings, the autobiography of the self-nation signals the location of its own productivity.

It is not altogether implausible, then, to retrieve from Ghana the suggestion that, without this seizure of the Other(s), Nkrumah's own beginning and that of his nation would not have entered the order of "real" time and knowledge; that order of history which permits the life over time to find its justification in a communally transforming ideopraxis. For the Nkrumahist moment leads us to suppose that, in an Africa invaded by the historical imperative of modernity, to have immured oneself in a temporality where, so to speak, "time did not count" is to have rendered "unthinkable" the beginnings that make historical eventuation meaningful. This, we must suppose, is the insight that accompanies the autobiographical celebration of Nkrumah's ability to salutarily recuperate the expansive spaces of modernity and reconcile it with the spaces

of an African domesticity, spaces once merely confined to a supplementary colonial status.

Ghana announces an African modernity, therefore, that nation-ness is understood to both signify and virtually guarantee. And, as we have seen, reaching for this expression of national expansiveness, Nkrumah is enjoined to abandon a theocratic guarantee of a primordial, irreducible difference--the position held by Hayford and others--and enter a secular imaginary of difference in the same. However, even as, so to speak, he enters the same order of the colonial ship's inscription, Nkrumah's future guarantee, it appears, is placed in the self-nation's being able to shape the demise of the ship's colonialist captain so that this self-nation reappears, is reborn, in a guise different from its colonial phylogeny. The projection of Ghana, therefore, is of an African difference not consumed by, but consummated in modernity, or the symbolic order of the same.

The thrust of this chapter, then, has been to draw on this relative coding of originality to demonstrate that the energy of relation and creation Nkrumah brings to the anti-colonial struggle rests on a dream of a middle class State becoming the modernist foundation of a virtual African nativity. It is a dream which, in time, Nkrumah brings to a realization--partial, alas--in Ghanaian nation-statehood. This is the sense of achievement borne by the concluding lines of the autobiography: as the story of Ghana winds down it circles back to its beginning to revise its earlier image of a sunken ship. Here, in the revised mode, Nkrumah paints a memorable portrait of himself as the African "captain" of the buoyant "ship" of a Ghanaian State which, "freshly launched,"

faces the "hazards of the high seas alone" (G, 290). The techno-modernist image captures an African nation poised to make its promising way through the middle passage of a challenging modernity. And the new captain, standing "on the bridge of that lone vessel as she confidently sets sail," is buoyed by the hope that the time of the Ghanaian nation will prove exemplary, projecting a nation that will have become a radiant beacon to all of Africa and the black world.

The sentiment resounds grandly in Nkrumah's speech on Independence day, March 6, 1957. "From now on," he declares, "there is a new African in the world and that new African is ready to fight his own battle and show that the black man is capable of managing his own affairs." The new Africans "are going to demonstrate to the world, to other nations, young as we are, that we are prepared to lay our own foundation."[17] Moreover, Ghana's example has "awakened" the "African in every territory on this vast continent...and the struggle for freedom will go on." Hence, African nationalism was not and could not be "confined to the Gold Coast--the new Ghana": indeed, in obedience to the modernist logic of Nkrumahist virtual nativity, the anti-colonial struggle "from now on...must be Pan-African nationalism...African political emancipation must spread throughout the whole continent" (G, 290).

Nkrumah and Ghana, then, bring us to the beginning of the end of an epoch, the colonial one; to a moment of arrival which foresees the ushering in of a brand new epoch, a decolonized time of African national modernity. In this connection, if many will concur that the culmination of the narrative of "Ghana" reads indeed as the autobiography

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[17] Kwame Nkrumah, I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology (New York: Praeger, 1962) 106-107.

of Kwame Nkrumah, as many, if not more, will agree that the narrative of early independent Africa, heralded by the former, reads, so to speak, as the "biography" of this dominant nationalist figure. Yet if the autobiography is a model of closure, the "biography" has hardly proved to be so. The story of black Africa, since the Independence of Ghana ushered in the moment of nationalist arrival, does not permit conclusiveness of the sort imagined by the protagonists of the final stages of the anti-colonial struggle. Hence, as we re-read the promise of Ghana and the premise of decolonization forty years on after Independence, one question appears de rigueur about the legacy of Nkrumah--and the others in the vanguard of the African nationalism of his era--in what now appears to be at worst a failed, at best an ailing, African revolution.

The question is this: from the vantage point of a present full of difficulty, how do we assess the legacy, in an Africa-wide dimension, of the man hagiographically referred to, among other things, as the "symbol of emergent Africa" and "The Black Star of Africa" (and hence the radiant beacon directing the African revolution)? I shall defer an answer--and it will be a tentative exploration of the question--to my concluding pages, with the caveat that when I speak of an Nkrumahist legacy, I only mean to mediate a certain conception of statehood in Africa through the premier symbol of the middle class State. I do not wish to be understood to mean that ideas of statehood in other parts of the continent were necessarily borrowed from Nkrumah, although it is this same figure that Cabral, the liberator of Guiné, would describe as "the strategist of genius in the struggle against classic colonialism."[18]

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[18] Amilcar Cabral, "Homage to Nkrumah," in Unity And Struggle (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979) 115.

As for Cabral, his homage is paid not out of blind adoration. On the contrary, as we shall see, it is the starting point of a critical reflection beyond étatisme, the colonialist legacy assumed of a necessity by Nkrumah (and middle class African nationalism generally), and which today has more or less turned out to be the liability captured recently in the titular Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State.[19] It is this liability compromising the possibilities dreamed in nation-statehood that I turn my attention to in the last half of the conclusion to this study.

[19] Basil Davidson, Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State (New York: Times Books, 1992).

CONCLUSION

Proposing the nationalist writing of "Ghana" as its object, this study has been an attempt to read this writing within multiple, interrelated contexts and orders of meaning. To this end, in the chapters that have gone before, as it has pursued the breadth of relations and mediations in which "Ghana" and its writing are necessarily imbricated, this study has:

i. considered Africa as an idea-nation whose meanings are sought out of and hence also inhere in the (universalist) projects of worlding;

ii. presented Ghana, a wholly imagined part of this African idea-nation and the processes going into its making, in a broad interplay of history, culture and social power--that is to say, it has considered the wherefores of Ghana's appearance and its consolidation in a dynamic relation of forces;

iii. read out the ambivalent or "double" order of being of a modernist African middle class;

iv. established, on the basis of a colonialist affect identified within this ambivalence, the motivations behind and going into the making of a middle class national(ist) allegory; and, finally,

v. given a demonstration of how the allegory of middle class nationalism undergoes radical revision so that, from the metaphysical idealism of its beginnings, its understandings are transformed and placed on a more secular footing, able as such to

conceive power and its realpolitical object(ive)s--such as "the people," the State--in pragmatic terms.

The comprehensiveness of these studies and investigations flow from questions enabled by a central thesis that resounds throughout this study: a thesis of a comparative African modernity. This thesis emerges first in and as a form of historical understanding: it has a basis as such in the live and sustained encounter between Europe and non-European Africa, an encounter whose beginnings go back in time to the fifteenth century. To the extent that, over time, the actualities of this (asymmetrical) encounter conspire to put in place a dimension of shared desire, desire shared between the human components of the encounter, what follows and includes the historical understanding of a comparative African modernity is a form of anthropological understanding. As for this historical anthropology of the emergent, what it discloses in its turn is the dimension of shared desire investing the structure of a common mythology, "the universal," and its mythos "worlding."

How might this relational distinction between mythology and mythos be understood? The former may be resolved as a structure--that is to say, a framework which defines the limit of possibility--and the latter the structure in its narrative enactment. In the relation between the universal and worlding, then, the comparative anthropological reading has proposed that the former be taken as the broad framework in which the limit of human possibility has come to be defined, and the latter as the domain of "narrative," or, more appropriately, of "narrativization," in which the desire invested in the structure is acted out or projected. Worlding, that is, brings the universal

into a projective narrative horizon--that is, into the shape of a beginning, a middle and an end--as possibility on the prospect.

I would hope that the opening chapter has given not only a cogent demonstration of the validity of these terms and formulations but also their relevance in what I have referred to (and implied in many places in this study) as the projective dimension of African modernity. What this study has proposed is that, in this dimension--as revealed in the nationalist writings reviewed--it is nation as project that stands out; and this project appears in the resolution, by and large, as coincident with and/or metonymic of universalist worlding. This coincidence, however, to the extent that it posits a reconciliation of the exceptional with the universal, is a curious one. That is, if nation points towards universalist worlding, it does so as the latter's differential mediation.[1] If so, this has argued in this study a certain mode or method of resolving the relation between the African nation and the universal; a method, that is, able to posit the particular and the general and investigate the inter-mediations linking them. An outline of this appears in my preface as the relation between modernist problematic and its (nationalist) thematic.

In my prefatory remarks, then, I have suggested that the modern might be thought in terms of a problematic--that is, as a general horizon in which abstract possibilities and potentials have taken (and take) shape. To these possibilities shaping themselves in the abstract, a thematic--in our case a nationalist thematic--brings a specific or particular

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[1] "No nation," as Anderson points out, "imagines itself coterminous with mankind." Hence, nation reads as a competitive principle, and if the competitive stakes are a participation in the universal, such participation is nevertheless to be achieved in terms of the exceptionally imagined nation. See Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities (London: Verso, 1983) 16.

mediation. As we have seen, the thematic, assuming the names "Ghana" and "Africa," is not easily defined. What has been a steady implication in this study, though, I would hope, is that between a thematic of "Ghana" and the problematic of the modern, between particular and general, "Africa" does service as an inter-mediate proposition. In Chapter 1, this study has recovered this inter-mediate "Africa" as a class patent, the patent which authenticates the nationalist identification of a middle class. The relationship this argues between the two is that between paradigm and metonym. That is to say, if "Africa" (and "the African") is paradigmatic, it confers a representative force on the class which imagines itself standing in a metonymic relation with it: the large (Africa) is displaced into the small (class) just as surely as the small is projected into the large. This, I would hope, has been illustrated centrally in Chapter 4, in Casely Hayford's Ethiopianist effusions.

The transformations of the relations at the level of the thematic do not end there. Since, today, a substantive continental African nation does not exist as such (and did not in an earlier era), what "substitutes" for it pragmatically is what has been realized in this study as (the writing of) "Ghana." In other words, within the imaginary paradigm "Africa," this study recognizes what is, as it were, a sub-paradigm--i.e., "Ghana." The latter exists in a "proxy" relationship with the former, and in this mode might be thought as conducting the business of the thematic in a sub-specific location within the exceptionally imagined paradigm. The consensual idea of Ghanaians--or for that matter, the various other nationals of the continent--being an African people argues this proxy relationship between specie and sub-specie. Chapter 2 has been demonstration of the

pragmatic contexts in which a Ghana of African people emerges; Chapter 5 concludes this demonstration, showing how the large (this time the sub-paradigm "Ghana") is displaced into the small (the middle class figure) and the small projected into the large in the figurations of the national allegory.

It goes without saying that, in the context reviewed by this study, the nationalist thematic does not read as pure realization of the possibilities of the modernist problematic. Hence African modernity has also been read as and in terms of a structure of compromise. Here we have seen the compromising of its projective thematic--and the agencies who (would) incarnate this thematic--by the insinuation into it of a structure of colonial(ist) power. It is the operation of this power that gives us the problematic doubling of affect investigated centrally in Chapter 3. A major conclusion reached was that--and it sounded in the paradoxes of liability in possibility; constraint in bestowal--for the possibilities implicit in modernity to reach thematic realization as African at all, historically, they had necessarily to pass through a colonialist preconditioning. In social-structural terms, as we have seen in Chapter 5, what the colonial(ist) precondition means is that the dream of African national modernity has been compelled to formulate its realization through and in terms of the State, that exogenous element of colonial imposition. It is this critical point that I wish to concentrate a few reflections on as I wind this study down. And to do so, I pick up from where I left off the discussion of Nkrumah's legacy at the end of Chapter 5.

Looking back, one of the claims made by Nkrumah during the period of his struggle that stands out is the one that asserts confidently: "Seek ye first the political kingdom and the rest shall be added unto you." If it stands out, it is simply because events in an unruly post-independence era have conspired to deny the vision it sought to realize. In the assertion itself, Nkrumah borrows a Christian formulation ("seek ye first the kingdom of God and the rest shall be added unto you") and transfers its metaphysical meaning--the kingdom of God as the be-all and end-all--to the political State. If, therefore, in securing the political kingdom, Nkrumah is envisioning the African struggle for an independent national-social order reaching a moment of culmination--a final moment of coherence, that is--this moment coheres as such in, and is firmly underwritten by, a more or less étatiste absolutism. And this absolute places the meaning of culmination by and large within its own logic, or sense, of an ending (i.e., as the be-all and end-all).[2] In that sense, a more or less absolute State--a State which has a central, autonomous and directing function--remains an article of faith with Nkrumah. The culmination of a national people is unimaginable without this postulate.

What does this envision in theory, if not in fact, for the daily practice of culture in the post-independence nation? It means that culture, the proper domain of nation-formation, is subordinated to politics.[3] Appearing from above, it is the force of the State,

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[2] The phenomenon of one-party States that in quick succession became the norm in post-independence Africa generally supports this interpretation.

[3] For an illustration of this point, see Christopher Miller's discussion of the fortunes of Keita Fodeba in Sekou Toure's Guinea in the chapter "Ethnicity and Ethics," in Theories of Africans (Chicago and London: University of Chicgo Press, 1990) 31-67. For a sustained reflection on the State-people, power-culture problem in post-colonial Africa, see Ngugi wa Thiong'o's later works (e.g., Detained, Decolonizing the Mind, etc).

it would seem, that "legitimates" the nation; and not the force of the nation, from a popular below, that confers on the State its true legitimacy. To the extent that the former holds true, the people, it would seem, become a mere object of politics, as such to be emptied or abstracted into the requirements of the political kingdom.

The thesis of étatiste absolutism I have been trying to advance as part of the legacy of Nkrumah and middle class African nationalism generally is not the creation of a subjective whim. On the contrary, we need to see its logic as imposed by objective circumstances. It would seem that the anti-colonial struggle, given the ethno-cultural plurality of the colonial countries, and to the extent that its purposes had to terminate in what Gramsci refers to as "passive" or "reform-revolution," had no choice but to begin by positing an antithesis, the exogenous State in this case--and this goes all the way back to Africanus Horton--and position it as prior to a thesis it had then to seek out: what African middle class nationalists, like Nkrumah, imagined as an endogenous principle of selfhood whose definition, beyond the merely ethnic and ethnocentric, would be national. In the progressive middle class nationalist imaginary, the modernity of the nation, then, points hopefully in the direction of a dialectical entry into a "higher" synthesis of antithesis and thesis, of exogenous and endogenous components--a culmination, we might say, in national auto-effectivity.

Inasmuch as Nkrumah's étatiste vision of culmination is driven by the dialectical priority of the political kingdom, in retrospect its positivism seems, perhaps, too brash. And one speaks here bearing in mind the convulsions, upheavals and setbacks that have beset (and continue to beset) many nation-states on the African continent since

Independence. What has transpired after Independence is a political kingdom which, stamped on the continent by colonial imposition, continues to define an imperative alien to the deepest aspiration of the peoples of Africa.[4] This historical and cultural antithesis, moreover, has proven durable and too strong, becoming a structure that insinuates itself into and pre-empts the normative constitution of endogenous national selfhood.[5] This, more or less, sums up the argument of the Nigerian literary and cultural critic, Abiola Irele, in a recent exercise in direct political critique that brings an impassioned judgement to bear on "The Crisis of Legitimacy in Africa."[6] Irele's piece marks once more the consistency with which, as failed practice, the political as such has featured as a major theme in the critical and creative projects of African cultural modernity in the last thirty or so years.

Yet, in all the critiques of a failed African nationalist practice that have emerged, one value-constant, perhaps, remains implicitly or explicitly upheld. This, as most centrally projected by Nkrumahist nationalism, is the ideal of virtual nativity as the foundation and goal of African cultural and political modernity. Perhaps, then, it is in the unflinching drive to realize--by any means necessary, as it were--a virtual nativity that we need to locate the enduring legacy of Nkrumah. And yet, if Nkrumah's vision bears, as we have seen, its own impressive baggage of étatiste liability, then we need to

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[4] A lot has been written on this issue. See Basil Davidson's already referred to Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State (New York: Times Books, 1992); Chinua Achebe's The Trouble With Nigeria (London: Heinemann, 1984), among others.

[5] See Ayi Kwei Armah's "An African Fable" for a brief but powerful illustration of this point. Présence Africaine 68 (1968): 193-196.

[6] See Abiola Irele, "The Crisis of Legitimacy in Africa," Dissent 39 (1992): 296-302.

register other possibilities beyond his moment. And, perhaps, more than any figure in the front ranks of African nationalism, it is Cabral who, in his difficult reflections on the relations between the political and the cultural in nationalist practice, suggests the modalities of this going beyond.

It is Cabral, then, who attempts to bring the metaphysics tainting the political kingdom--and hence Nkrumahist virtual nativity--to earth by arguing in outstanding fashion the priority of the cultural in the political, the latter as represented by the antithesis of the colonial State against which the struggle for national liberation contends. In an oft-quoted piece, Cabral argues that to the extent that "imperialist domination has a vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture."[7] The point then is that the political act of liberation begins and ends in culture. Cabral thus redefines liberation or independence as a culmination whose logic is--which must be posited in a sense of--a beginning. And in this beginning the cultural and the political, people and power, are seen as elements that must negotiate their way, without the grand political preconception, towards their mutual reconciliation in practice.

This proposition shifts from the etatiste positivism--the grand political preconception, that is--that sees the people as a singular political object, an abstraction emptying into the political kingdom, to the people, in their variety, as cultural subjects. As such, from below, their variety--and Cabral could appreciate the ethno-cultural variety of the popular component of his own struggle--is radically formative of, rather than waiting to be singularly reformed from above by, the politics of national liberation. For

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[7] Amilcar Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture," in Unity and Struggle (London: Heinemann, 1980) 143.

Cabral, then, what I have referred to as the foundation and goal of African cultural and political modernity, virtual nativity, reads as a datum of gradualism, reached at a "confluence of the levels of culture of different social groups..."[8] But the reality is that such convergence is never "reached," in the sense of arriving at an ideal equilibrium; on the contrary it is a vanishing point which, for this reason, enjoins a nationalist practice able, with the beacon of democracy before it, to renew its goals in, and adapt its means to, the ever changing demands of cultural, political and economic life.

These brief reflections on Cabral must remain at this stage a simplified interpretation of the by no means simple thought of the late Guinéan leader. As I bring this study to a close, his necessarily difficult insights into the nationalist thematic in African modernity are in themselves a critical reflection on the fragility, the hollowness even, of the grand constructs of nationalist legitimation of the middle class founders--the world-historically mediated State, representing the ulterior Reason towards which the grand narratives of "Ghana," "Africa," must strive[9]--when tested against the ground realities of everyday practice in the post-colonial African nation.[10]

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[8] The wording I reproduce here is from the translation that appears in Return to the Source: Selected Speeches of Amilcar Cabral, itself reproduced in Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader, eds. P. Williams and L. Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 59. See Unity and Struggle 147.

[9] So, for instance, J. B. Danquah proclaims in 1943: "We must have power, and must adequately fill in that power to give us world citizenship." The link Danquah makes between power and worldly status, inasmuch as it is a central datum of middle class nationalist desire, is reflected, as we have seen, in the étatisme driving Nkrumah's narrative of "Ghana"; and it is there in Fanon's narrative of the "African revolution."

[10] In addition to Irele above, see Achille Mbembe's vigorous exposé of the realities of daily practice in what he refers to as the African "postcolony": "The Banality of Power and the Aesthetics of Vulgarity in the Postcolony" Public Culture 4.2 (Spring 1992): 1-30. But see also Tejumola Olaniyan's response: "Narrativizing Postcoloniality: Responsibilities" Public Culture 5.1 (Fall 1992): 47-55.

And yet the assertion that "the way out is the way through"--attributed to the American cultural critic Kenneth Burke--is one that Cabral would appreciate. If so what he leaves us is the insight that we must be prepared to revisit constantly what it is we are going through (and cannot help but go through), treating it not as a process once understood but responding to it as one responds to a protean challenge. In that sense, then, what is required in nationalist practice is not the "metaphysical" sense of ends so much as a radical sense of beginning that, regarding ends as vanishing points, places the emphasis on continually renewed effort--in theory as in practice. I would hope that the revaluative insights of this work are a step in this direction.

I can do no more, then, than to conclude with the sentiments expressed in the epigraph--taken from Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History"--with which Biodun Jeyifo, the Nigerian Africanist critic, begins his discussion of the writing of Africa in a postcolonial culture of continental letters:

> Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And the enemy has not ceased to be victorious.[11]

This study, a historical study of the writing of Africa, African modernity, acknowledges this insight. If the negativity of our recent history conspires to deny us the presumption of hope, I would hope that this critical reading of a vibrant epoch of nationalism--a reading with an interest in establishing a claim to a positive history which is also ours--teaches us, through the example of the difficult struggles of an earlier age, not to despair.

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[11] See Biodun Jeyifo, "Literature in Postcolonial Africa" Dissent 39 (Summer 1992): 353.

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